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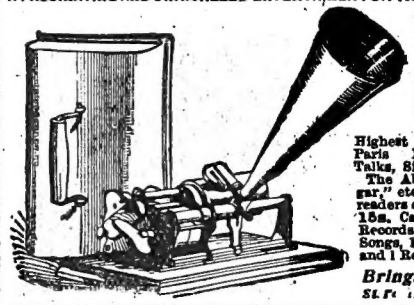

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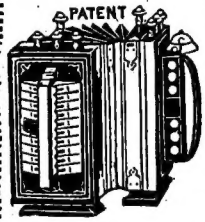

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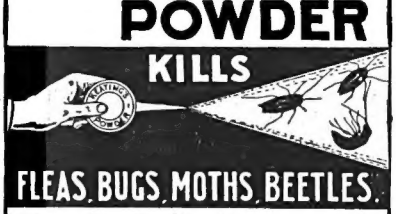

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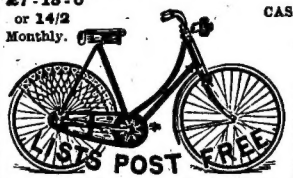

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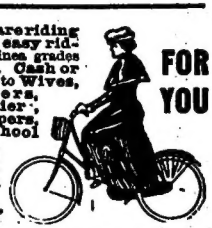

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Short Stories

No. 694.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending April 19th, 1902.

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THE

BRAINS OF THE FORCE.

By R. Norman Silver.

I.—THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE.

CHAPTER I.
"Found Here an Hour Ago."

"Good morning, sir," Inspector Hardwick is speaking from the Maple Street station. "Can you come round at once, sir? There is a body lying close to and we should be glad if you would see it before it is removed. Rather an unusual case; we don't know whether to suspect foul play or not."

The words stole faintly to the ear of the shirt-sleeved listener, who lounged at his ease near a conveniently-hung wall-telephone, holding in position, with a large, lean hand, the ebonite cylinder of the receiver. He himself was large and lean, yet obviously also as hard as the proverbial nails. Grey-eyed and red-haired, his big, jovial mouth was half hidden by a moustache fit for a cavalry officer, and his prominent even teeth were faultlessly white.

An expression of alert, almost eager interest lit up his features, and he stooped to the transmitter of the telephone to utter a brief acknowledgment of the summons the instrument had just delivered. His accent was unmistakably, rollickingly Irish. Save for the irrepressible intonation of the Green Isle, however, his English could scarcely have been more crisp and cultured.

"Sounds mysterious, inspector," he said. "I'll step across and investigate. Investigation is the forefinger of the long arm of the Law, eh, Inspector?"

With which pithy observation its maker hooked up the receiver of the instrument, put on a worn frock-coat, and pulled down a pair of soiled cuffs. The apartment in which he stood was the small inner parlour of a typical town surgery. Its furniture and fittings suggested that it had by no means been recently established; the walnut chairs and writing-table were scratched and old-fashioned, the carpet threadbare and discoloured, and though there was an air of superficial tidiness about the room and its contents, the flood of spring sunshine from the cracked plate-glass windows revealed, on the cornices and overmantel, the dust of years.

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Upon the writing-table itself, in a space cleared amid a litter of miscellaneous documents, loose insurance forms, and ripped-up envelopes addressed to "Lucius Shand, Esq., M.R.C.S." a spirit-lamp burnt under a Florence flask. Lucius Shand went over and extinguished the flame, thrusting a plug of cotton-wool into the narrow neck of the vessel above it.

This done, he took down from a rack attached to the door of his room a rough tweed ulster and a flat-crowned, hard felt hat, donned them, and traversed a dingy ante-chamber, with a dispensing-counter, behind which an assistant, in rusty black garments, was perusing the *Telegraph*.

Gaining the street beyond, Lucius Shand consulted his watch and strode off. It was close upon nine o'clock of a bright April forenoon—the rain which had fallen in the early morning, was fast disappearing from the flagged pavements.

As he hurried along the busy yet low-class thoroughfare upon which his surgery opened, his arms swinging, his keen, diminutive grey eyes ostensibly bent on the ground, he was the recipient of an almost endless series of salutes. The carter by his waggon, the idler at the corner, the constable on his beat or on point duty, the cabman from his box, each, in his own way, recognised Lucius Shand's presence. The jerk of an elbow, the flourish of a whip, the contact between two grimy fingers and a tattered cap, the palm smartly lifted to the brim of a regulation helmet—one or other marked at intervals the surgeon's progress.

Lucius Shand was in the heart of Division B—at once the richest and the poorest, the busiest and the drowsiest, the smallest and the most straggling of all the police divisions of a famous English mercantile town and seaport. And Lucius Shand, member of the Royal College of Surgeons, an Irishman, a gentleman, and a born criminologist, was divisional surgeon to Division B.

At the end of the short road down which he was hastening rose a tall, sooty-fronted building, with ample steps and a spacious, yet forbidding entrance. Its blank, curtainless

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sashes were like those of no other class of architecture; from roof to basement it bore upon it the stamp of the Criminal Law.

The surgeon mounted to the bare hallway and stalked into a department labelled "Inspector's Office." That person himself—a broad-shouldered, bull-throated figure in a soldierly braided uniform—came to meet his visitor. They exchanged greetings, then descended together to the level of the street and went up it, the surgeon's escort selecting the route.

While they walked, quickly yet deliberately, they chatted of the weather, of the war, of anything but the mission upon which they were bound. Despite the inspector's telephonic hint of unusual mystery, such errands, on the whole, were common enough to himself and Lucius Shand.

They were threading Division B, at the quarter where it helps to form the central portion of a town which is admittedly among the first half-dozen of English cities. Part of the Division borders the slowly-moving river on which the town in question is situated, and after including a section of the shipping and bonded warehouses, it runs inland across the commercial and banking locality, takes in a slice of the shopping district, and reaches the fringe of a rustic suburb. It was towards the lofty modern blocks of the "office" neighbourhood that the inspector was piloting his companion.

Here, by a stout hoarding between two huge nests of offices and sale-rooms, the former halted. A crowd was gathered at the wooden gates which gave admission to the inclosed space; three or four policemen kept the mob back. Saluted by their subordinates, the inspector and the surgeon passed through.

The hoarding shut off from the street a strip of building-ground, an older structure than the adjacent blocks having been removed by the house-breakers. The foundations of its projected successor had already burrowed deeply into the earth. High up against the side wall of one of the flanking buildings there hung in the air a spiral staircase that had been originally devised to allow of access, in the event of fire, to the lower and now destroyed block. Its final stair was fully a hundred feet above the thoroughfare without and below that again the builders had opened a gulf of another thirty feet. A small door in the wall gave upon it and the mass to which it clung dwarfed it to the texture of a spider's web.

Lucius Shand glanced up at this curious feature of the place as he followed the inspector down into the bowels of the earth, among girders and concrete piers and damp soil and liquid mud. Soon they came to a point, directly beneath the spiral staircase and a hundred and thirty feet lower than its terminating step, where a tarpaulin covered a patch of the soft clay between the incomplete foundations. A constable stood sentry by it, and, close to, a group of working men, masons, bricklayers, and navvies, whispered together.

At a sign from the inspector, the tarpaulin was removed, and the surgeon went forward to behold, lying stiffly with a dark, foreign-looking face upturned to the blue April sky, a handsome, well-dressed man, of more than medium height and stalwart proportions. In his scarf a diamond pin still glittered and on one swarthy finger gleamed a broad gold signet-ring. Not far off was a silk hat, dented and broken as if by a fall, yet conspicuously glossy and fashionable.

"Found here an hour ago, sir," said the inspector, referring to the lifeless form, "by some of the men coming on duty—the time-keeper sent for a constable immediately. Nothing has been touched, as far as we can see. The question is, how did he get into this odd corner of the world?"

Lucius Shand stooped to the rigid frame, touched the head with a gentle, expert hand, moved it a little, then displaced slightly—the action showing his great strength—the awkward unyielding body. There was a significant depression in the clay beneath it. He glanced up once more at the spiral staircase a hundred and thirty feet above, and from it again to the dead man. The police officers and the labourers were observing him respectfully.

Going down on one knee, the surgeon examined the body more carefully—the neck, the lips, the chest, the hands, for marks of violence. The fingers of the right hand were clenched; Lucius Shand peered into them, then, slowly, determinedly, forced them open.

Something fell from them on to the muddy soil—it was a crumpled flower, a white chrysanthemum with a short, thick, woody stem. And to the stem there clung a shred of lace—of delicate cream lace, such as a woman wears at her bosom.

CHAPTER II.
"I Tell You it is Impossible."

"Dead, my dear inspector; Mr. Rafael Mendoza—since that is his name—was as dead as Queen Anne hours before he landed where he was discovered this morning. True, in getting there he broke his back, fractured his skull and splintered half-a-dozen ribs. But had he been alive when those injuries happened some internal effusion of blood would have resulted. As it is, there is none."

Lucius Shand transferred a large, loosely-folded leather roll from the pocket of his ulster to that of his frock-coat, tapping it significantly as he did so.

"These are better detectives than any you have at Scotland Yard," he remarked, "they are the little steel bloodhounds of science that never get on false scents. Don't you wish you could say as much for yourself inspector?"

Inspector Hardwick scratched his head as he sat at his desk, turned a page or two of his report-book and gazed thoughtfully out of the bare window-pane at the quiet close of the April day.

"It's a queer case," he admitted; "the deceased is Mr. Mendoza, right enough, a well-to-do stockbroker, a Spaniard by birth and a bachelor. His offices are in Ocean Buildings, that's the big block on the left of where he was found."

"The one with the spiral fire-escape stairs," added the surgeon. The inspector nodded.

"Yes, sir," he said, "and, of course, we've made inquiries, going on the assumption, to smooth the way, that it is an affair of suicide. Indeed, pending the outcome of your examination, sir, we were inclined to consider it such. The depression in the ground suggested that the deceased had fallen vertically with much force, no doubt from the spiral staircase above. That your autopsy would appear to confirm, sir, though it disposes of any suicide theory."

"News for news," observed Lucius Shand. "May I ask if your investigations have revealed anything of moment—whether consistent or not with the hypothesis of suicide?"

"I cannot say they have, sir," was the answer. "Mr. Mendoza's personal affairs appear to be in a most satisfactory condition. As a matter of fact, he was left working alone in his private room last night by his confidential clerk, who went at eight o'clock. The hall-doors had been closed, as usual, at seven-thirty. At ten the caretaker finally locked up. That is all we know. Mr. Mendoza was formally identified this morning, but the papers on the body gave us sufficient of a clue before that."

"Humph!" retorted the surgeon, pushing his lean fingers through his red hair; "well, as the coroner may ask me to-morrow for an opinion as to the possible connection between that same spiral staircase and Mr. Mendoza's broken bones, perhaps it may save an adjournment if you run round to Ocean Buildings with me and let me overhaul the contrivance. I suppose you have already done so,"

"I have sir," said the inspector, "but without throwing any great light on the problem. The door at the head of the staircase was discovered open this morning. Every tenant on the upper floors of Ocean Buildings has a key, in the event of fire cutting off the lift well and central steps at any time; that in Mr. Mendoza's offices was missing. Neither was it on his person or in the lock of the fire-escape door. The whole business is certainly rummy."

With which confession the chief of the Maple Street station rose to put on his peaked and braided cap and act upon Lucius Shand's request. Five minutes later they were entering the massive granite hallway of Ocean Buildings. The commercial day was over, the lift attendant had gone, and a huge polished oak leaf of the outer doors had been bolted in position.

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"The caretaker lives at the top of the house," explained the surgeon's companion, "we shall find him somewhere about cleaning." And Lucius Shand was led promptly up the arched tiers of stone steps that surrounded the lift.

They had mounted almost to the loftiest floor when the sound of a bucket set down close to attracted Inspector Hardwick's attention, and he turned into a dusky avenue bordered by the entrances to various suites of offices. Not far off a man was filling a row of coal-scuttles from a wheeled bin.

"Hullo, Corrin," cried the inspector. "Here you are—I want you to let Doctor Shand have a look at that spiral fire-escape stair of yours; the one on the south wall."

The caretaker made a motion of assent and relinquished his shovel. He was a tall, grey-headed, grey-bearded fellow, in coarse vest and trousers and woollen shirt. But he carried himself with a martial uprightness, and, as he stalked off, guiding them in the indicated direction, his precise if loisurely gait was that of the old soldier.

Further along the wide passage was joined by a narrow sloping lobby, at whose extremity was visible a neatly furnished kitchen. Upon the threshold of this lobby—obviously the doorway to the caretaker's private quarters—was lounging a young man in the trim dark reefer suit and bowler hat of the provincial clerk.

Within the angle of the lobby itself stood a girlish figure, half child half woman. The main gleam of the dying spring day shone on her from some skylight above, and Lucius Shand saw that she had rippling brown tresses and eyes of a singularly sparkling, yet wistful blue. As they lingered there, lost to all but one another, the surgeon recognised in them yet another Romeo and Juliet, the two eternal representatives of romance. Romance that knows no distinctions of caste or fortune.

"Josie," said the caretaker, in a quiet, yet peremptory tone, "get me the keys of the fire-doors, there's a good lass."

The girlish countenance in the shadow of the lobby grew suddenly white; there was an instant's hesitation, and then the feminine rustle of skirts as the caretaker's order was obeyed.

The inspector nodded to the other partner in the recent *tête-à-tête*. "Mr. Mendoza's confidential clerk," he whispered to Lucius Shand, "evidently spoons on Corrin's pretty daughter. Josie Corrin is an admitted belle in these parts—several of our men on the beats around have been fairly crazy over her; it was quite a joke one time at the station. You're late to-night, Mr. Drury," he added aloud.

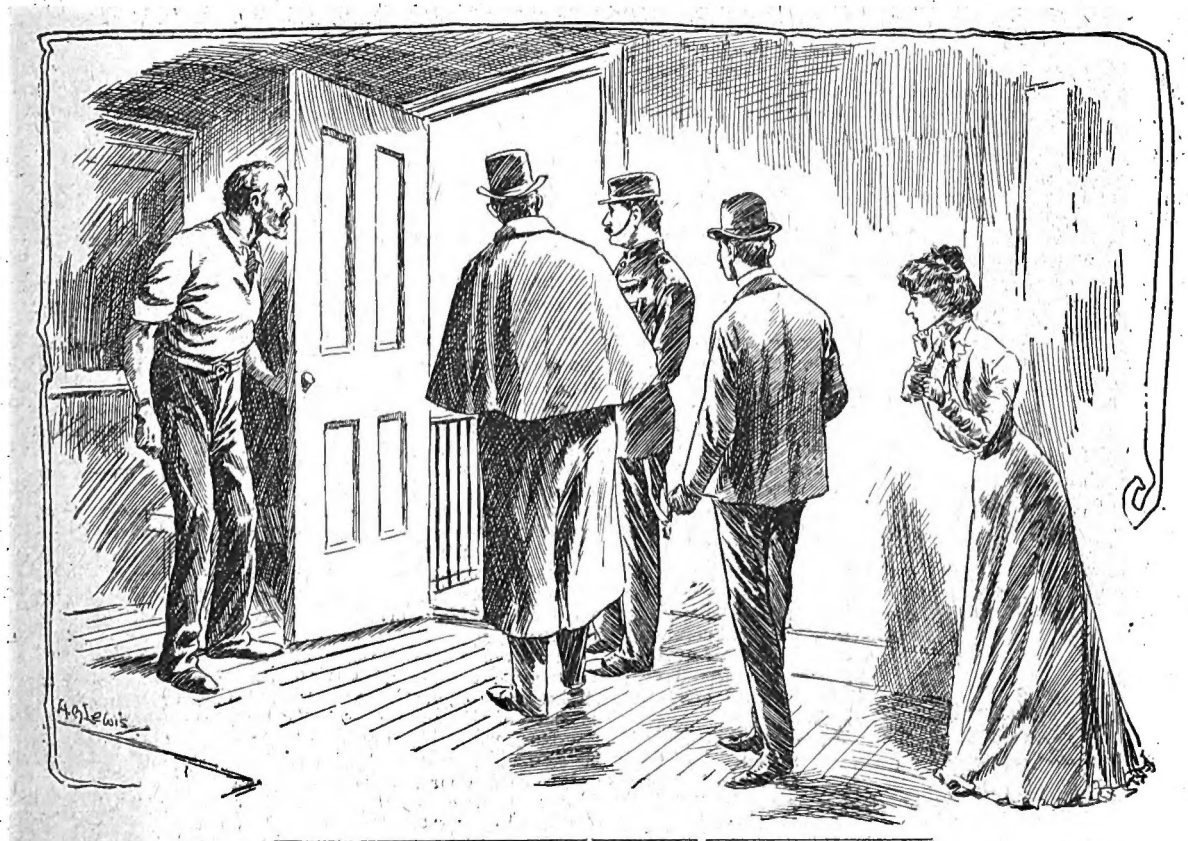
The person addressed coloured.

"We—we were talking over poor Mr. Mendoza's mysterious death," he said awkwardly; "it has upset everyone in the building, I believe."

"No doubt, no doubt," agreed the inspector. A footstep and the chime of metal against metal interrupted them. The girl was reappearing with a handful of heavy keys strung on a rusty chain. The caretaker reached into the lobby for them, selected one, and moving athwart the concrete flooring of the wide avenue in which he had been working, unlocked a low, deeply-set door in the main wall. It swung open and the evening air stole in—through the aperture was visible a patch of sky and a railed platform.

The surgeon and the inspector went towards it; the young clerk followed them. The girl, too, glided in the same direction, as if she were drawn thither against her will.

Lucius Shand stepped out on to the species of iron balcony



The girl, too, glided in the same direction, as if she were drawn thither against her will.

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and glanced down. A hundred and fifty feet below him was the principal thoroughfare of the B Division, thirty feet below that the excavated foundations of the structure that was to spring up and inclose the spiral stair and its flanking windows in the white-tiled wall whose beginning could just be seen beneath.

"It has been a sort of show place, lately, this," commented Inspector Hardwick, "no end of coming and going, they say; every tenant in the house has been opening it to their friends for weeks past—ever since the building next door was pulled down and the view cleared. That may have suggested——"

He paused. The caretaker was standing stiffly at ease beside them and a police-officer is habitually cautious. Unheeding the broken sentence, Lucius Shand walked slowly down the suspended spiral and halted on the last step but one.

For some moments he remained there, gazing into the void below him, the cool evening wind fanning his odd figure in its long ulster. His hands were in his pockets, he himself as unconcerned as if he were on solid ground instead of on the verge of an abyss. At last he turned and strolled back. When he entered the low doorway the young clerk accosted him.

"Dr. Shand," he said, "excuse me, but I know you, as do many people, by sight. I am Jack Drury, Mr. Mendoza's confidential clerk. Tell me, does all this mean that you think Mr. Mendoza committed suicide from that staircase? I tell you it is impossible—why, he had no key for this door. I had been showing a customer the staircase; it is quite the rage to stand on that bottom step and feel yourself hanging in the air—and I happened to pocket our key and carry it home. I only remembered the fact this afternoon. No, Dr. Shand, Mr. Mendoza did not commit suicide; he must have been murdered last night, as he went out to go home, and was thrown down there to be hidden. What if the door was open this morning? Someone who showed the staircase yesterday must have failed to secure it properly."

Lucius Shand surveyed the speaker—he was a frank, characteristic young Englishman and the surgeon perceived it.

"I am not at liberty," he replied gravely, "to express any opinion whatever on the subject. But I have no doubt that Inspector Hardwick will make a note of your statement."

He put a hand lightly on the other's shoulder—the surgeon's lean fingers seemed to hover about a large yellow chrysanthemum in Mr. Jack Drury's buttonhole.

"You are young to have been in Mr. Mendoza's confidence," he pursued; "no doubt you had risen in his employ—you may have been sincerely attached to him. If he should, as you say, have been murdered, you would be glad to see his murderers brought to justice?"

"I should indeed, doctor," was the ingenious response. Lucius Shand nodded a thoughtful assent, and apparently glancing neither to right nor left, bade Mr. Jack Drury good-evening and walked away, accompanied by the serene, if uncomprehending inspector.

In the street below, the divisional surgeon faced his official colleague. "Hardwick," he said, "I'm not a detective, but you've accepted a tip or two from me before now. Do it again—let a plain-clothes man keep that caretaker and his daughter in sight for the next few days—certainly until after the inquest."

Inspector Hardwick stared. "Michael Corrin!" he gasped, "and—and Josie! I'll be——oh, very well, Doctor, very well!"

CHAPTER III.
"It Has Cost Two Lives!"

"A pretty girl, a dainty, winsome little lass—and in love. Poor child, poor child!—who could have the heart to blame her for keeping her father's secret. And yet, a blow was struck; that makes it manslaughter—she is at least an accessory after the fact."

Lucius Shand was muttering to himself between meditative puffs of a heavy bull-dog briar. He sat before the hearth of his surgery parlour, his feet stretched to the smouldering embers, his chin on his chest. His lounging figure was almost invisible in the gloom of the unlighted apartment.

Barely an hour had elapsed by the round-faced clock over the mantel, since he had parted from Inspector Hardwick after their call at Ocean Buildings, and most of it the surgeon had spent in an armchair and meditation.

Suddenly he rose, lit a gas-bracket, and took up some sheets of memoranda—they were the notes of his post-mortem on the Spanish stockbroker, Rafael Mendoza.

"'Extensive bruise over left breast,'" he read, "'coincident in extent with a gunmetal cigarette case in deceased's upper vest pocket on same side. Made during life—extravasation of blood under the skin.'"

He turned a folio and perused another passage. "'Extensive mitral disease of heart—of long standing; death from collapse of valves in left cavity. Due possibly to a blow on the thorax or to excitement. Conceivably spontaneous."

He nodded his head gravely. "Poor child!" he murmured, "how terrified she must have been—how——"

The reflection was interrupted. His assistant had opened the door from the ante-chamber—someone darted unceremoniously into the room. It was the young fellow Lucius Shand had seen at Ocean Buildings—Mr. Jack Drury, the dead stockbroker's confidential clerk. He was white and blown.

"Come!—come at once, doctor!" the surgeon was desired gaspingly, "he—he has taken poison—strychnine, he told us—Mr. Corrin; you saw him this evening at Ocean Buildings you remember. He is delirious, raving. Josie—his daughter—is alone with him."

Lucius Shand snatched up his hat, forgot, for once, his almost inevitable ulster, darted into the dispensary, tipped on to some odd pieces of wrapping-paper portions of two hastily selected powders, screwed them up, thrust them into his pocket and hurried out of the surgery. Jack Drury kept abreast of him with difficulty.

"How did he get this—this supposed strychnine?" queried the surgeon, turning abruptly to his companion. "Do you know, Mr. Drury?"

The young clerk struggled for breath. "He—he must have gone out for it," was the answer; "he left me talking with Josie—with his daughter."

Lucius Shand was striding with rapid steps, faster than some men could have run. "You—you are interested in Miss Corrin?" he asked.

"Y—yes," stammered the other, pantingly, "we—we are engaged."

"Ah!" said the surgeon, and relapsed into silence. At the imposing entrance of Ocean Buildings, Mr. 'Jack' Drury pushed wide the unlatched doors and sped up towards the caretaker's rooms. Lucius Shand imitated him. Nearing the topmost landing they heard the sound of contending voices, one fierce and high, one subdued and pleading, with an accent of terror in it.

The surgeon gained the next corridor at a bound. The caretaker, his shirt gaping at the throat, his waistcoat flung off, his face drenched with a clammy dew, was struggling to pass out of the small door which led to the spiral staircase. His daughter, blanched and horrified, was seeking to prevent his egress. As the surgeon came within sight the caretaker unlocked the door and dragged it open.

"I will, Josie, I will," screamed the victor, "he's there, I tell you—he's got on to the bottom step somehow and he'll come up. The police doctor suspects—I mustn't let that infernal Spanish Jew take to haunting the place; I should be found out. Leave go, I say."

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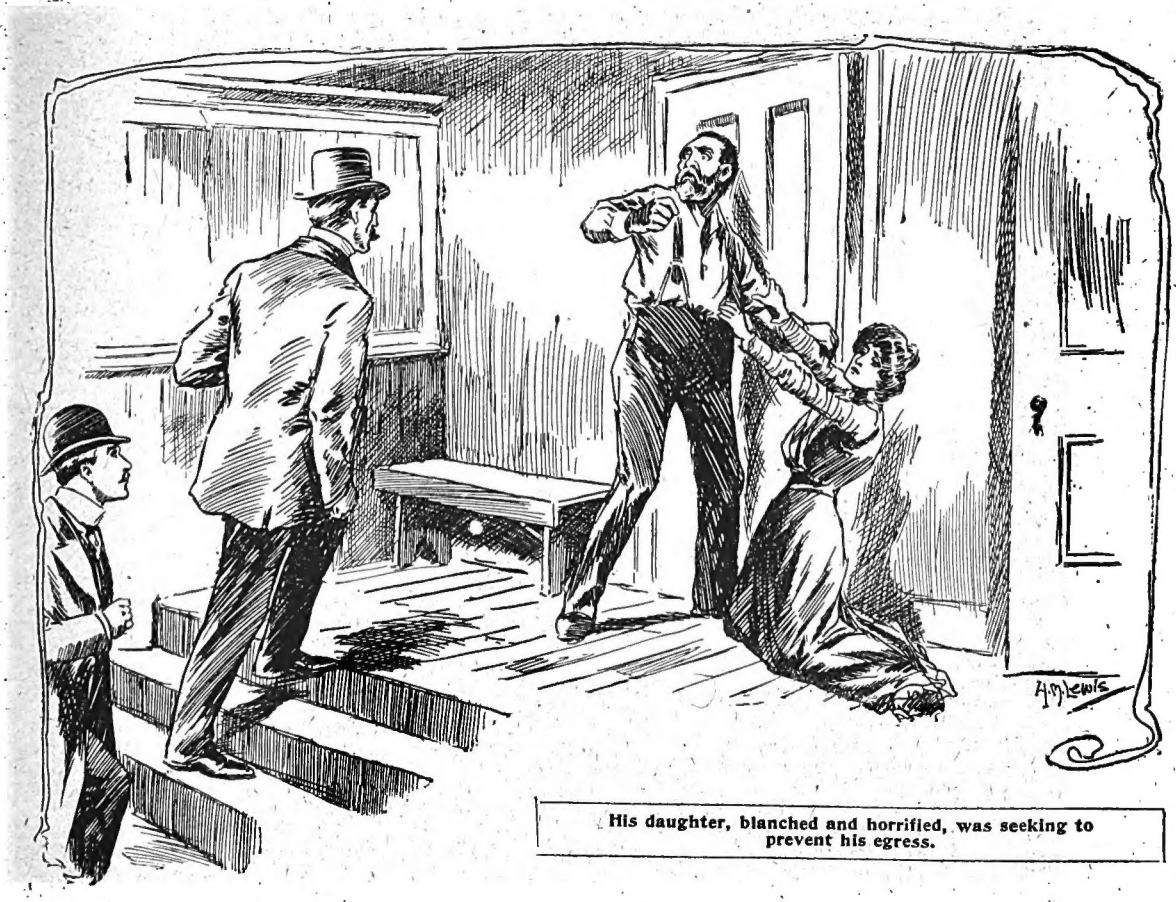

His daughter, blanched and horrified, was seeking to prevent his egress.

He wrenched himself free, as Lucius Shand and Jack Drury reached the singular exit, and disappeared down the spiral stair. The surgeon rushed after him, a light from a great window in the sheer side of the building falling on them both as they went.

Maddened by his internal agony, and delirious from the effects of the poisonous drug he had swallowed, Michael Corrin scrambled to the bottom of the hanging stair, knelt down, and began to hammer at the last of the metal steps.

"Get off," he shrieked, "loose your hands, do you hear, you Jew. I'm innocent—I never meant to do it. You should have let her be when she told you. Let go, I say—you made less objection this morning."

Lucius Shand had glided stealthily from step to step and ventured at length to clutch at the caretaker's shirt. But the latter sprang up with an ear-splitting howl, reeled, and pitched off into the black void about them. The divisional surgeon was left alone on the quivering iron structure.

There was a scream from the head of the stair, and hastily collecting himself, Lucius Shand hurried back. Josie Corrin had fainted in her lover's arms. The surgeon looked at the girl's drawn, pale features and drooping eyelids. Then he lifted the lace that hung at her bosom. It was delicate and creamy, and in it there was a tiny irregular hole.

"Poor child!" he said. "Mr. Drury, she is fatherless—nothing that lives could have survived that fall, strychnine or no strychnine. You gave her a flower yesterday, Mr. Drury—a white Japanese crysanthemum; a pretty flower, you are partial to crysanthemums, I see. That flower has cost two lives. Yet she is guiltless of either. You are the sort of man to stand by her and I am glad of it. There will be a nine days' wonder but as your wife she will soon forget it all. Even the Law will not blame her for keeping her father's secret."

The young clerk folded, instinctively, the unconscious girl in his arms. "What do you mean?" he faltered, dazed by this accumulation of mystery and tragedy.

Lucius Shand pointed to the torn lace. "Last night," said the surgeon, "Mr. Mendoza lingered to flirt with your betrothed as he went home. He snatched the flower from her breast, she cried out, her father came, and, being an old soldier and choleric, struck him a blow in the chest, Mendoza dropped, dead—his heart was diseased. Horrified, Corrin took time to consider methods of concealing his technical manslaughter—to which, unfortunately, he attached too much importance. Ultimately, he flung the body from the foot of the spiral stair in the small hours of this morning. That route he has himself followed to his death. There will be two inquests to-morrow instead of one. If you know any kindly woman in the neighbourhood, arrange for her to stay with that poor innocent there. I will get you up a plain-clothes constable from the station to act as messenger."

He went down to the telephone in the hall and had himself put into communication with Inspector Hardwick.

"Corrin has just committed suicide," he said, "I was sent for ten minutes ago and am at Ocean Buildings. I was right about Mendoza. You might send me a man or two round."

In his office at the station the listening inspector well-nigh dropped the receiver.

"By the living Jingo!" he muttered, but we weren't wrong when we called him 'The Brains of the Force'!"

[Next week: "The Woman at the Little White House."]

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MR. BOWSER'S TRIBULATIONS.

The Effect a Summer Drink like his Mother used to Make had on him.

The Bowsers had just finished dinner the other evening when a cart delivered a barrel at the basement door, and in reply to Mrs. Bowser's queries Mr. Bowser explained:

"That's all right. I had a man down the street make me a cask of summer drink after my mother's old recipe."

"What sort of summer drink?"

"Well, it isn't exactly root beer or ginger ale, but something between the two. It's to purify the blood and act as a tonic during hot weather. Mother used to make it by the barrel, and doctors would send twenty miles to get a gallon for a patient. I happened to mention it to this man, and he knew just how to make it. It's a regular elixir, and I propose to drink about a gallon a day."

"I should say such stuff would be more apt to hurt than help you," observed Mrs. Bowser after awhile.

"Stuff! Stuff! Would you call champagne stuff?" he demanded. "It's a very funny thing that I can't get something fresh into this house without your finding fault. Any wife but you could see that I am all run down to a shadow and that I need a tonic of some sort. Because I haven't sat down and groaned and complained you think nothing is the matter with me."

"Is anything the matter with you?"

"Oh, no, of course not. I simply have a torpid liver, a case of dyspepsia, giddiness, roaring in the ears, flying pains, and half a dozen other things. Some men would have been in bed a month ago, but because I persist in keeping up you can't see but what I have the health of an ox."

"And this summer drink will cure you?"

"Certainly. That's what I got it for. I'm not paying twelve shillings for a cask of pond water. I hope you will have the good sense to take it at the same time, as I notice a dulness in your eyes, and a languid air about your movements."

Mr. Bowser said no more, and ten minutes later he rolled the cask down the cellar and proceeded to tap it. The taste was all he anticipated. Indeed, he smacked his lips over it and said to himself that it was a superior article to his mother's famous brew. It had a certain twang to it which hers lacked, and this twang so captivated his palate that he imbibed a pint or more before going upstairs.

He carried another pint with him, expecting Mrs. Bowser to drink half of it, but as she declined even to taste it he sat down to his paper and sipped at intervals until the jug was empty. About ten minutes after the last of the summer drink had disappeared Mrs. Bowser was suddenly startled by a "Ha! ha! ha!" and she looked up to find Mr. Bowser gazing at her with a smile all over his face.

"What on earth is the matter with you?"

"Nothing—nothing 't all," he replied, with another laugh. "I was just thinking how nice you are. Yes, Mrs. Bowser, you are an awfully nice woman. 'Scuse me, will you, while I taste that summer drink and see if it's all right?"

"Is anything wrong with you?" she asked as she looked hard at him.

"Nothing, my dear, 'cept that my dyspepsia is better. Yes, my dear, you are a nice woman—awfully nice. So's the cat—awfully nice cat."

He got up and went down for some more of the elixir, and when he returned at the end of ten minutes his face was flushed, his eyes sparkled, and he sat down in a reckless way and chuckled and said:

"Yesh, Mishus Bowser, you are an awfully nice woman. I'm glad I married you, I am."

"You—you have been drinking!" she gasped as she sternly regarded him.

"Me been zhrinking! Ha, ha, ha! Why, Mishus Bowser, how funny you talk! I just been zhrinking shome of zhat summer drink; zhat's all. My mozzer used to make zhrink like zhat, you know. Poor mozzer!"

"Look here, Mr. Bowser, the man who prepared that cask for you must have put whisky or brandy in it. You are as good as drunk. What a shame! Let me get you to bed at once."

Mr. Bowser was getting drunk in the recognised way. He had begun with the "funny feeling." Her words took him out of that and into the next scale, and, assuming a look of great dignity, he demanded:

"Woman, be careful what you shay! How dare you even hint zhat I am intox-toxicated?"

"But you must be," she persisted.

"Never, woman—never! When you shee Misher Bowser the worse for zhrink, you will shee the end of the world. Take back your vile impu-pu-tation!"

"It is probably only a slight giddiness," she said as she schemed to get him upstairs.

"Zhat's all—just giddiness. I'm a giddy old thing, you shee. No, I won't come to bed. I want to sit up and shee the old year out."

Mrs. Bowser realised that she could do nothing until he had changed his mind, and she sat down to wait. The cat came in from the back yard, and took a long squint at Mr. Bowser, and as she saw how things were she purred a few bars of the air of "Dad's Got 'Em Again!" and took up a position on the sofa to await further developments. Mr. Bowser's next scale was that of the sorrowful.

All at once it flashed upon him that his mother was no more, and with tears running down his cheeks he wailed out:

"Mishus Bowser, how can you sit zhere like zhat when you know my poor mozzer is dead?"

She had no answer to make, and, breaking into sobs, he continued:

"Poor, poor mozzer! I was her only shon. When I think zhat she is dead and gone——"

For five minutes Mr. Bowser gave way to his grief. When he raised his head, he had passed on to the next step, and, drying his eyes, he flourished his arm and uttered a laugh and exclaimed:

"Whoopee! Mishus Bowser, I'm going to show you zhat I can make the best speech you ever heard."

"For mercy's sake be quiet, or the cook will hear you!" she cautioned.

"What do we care for the cook? You shay I can't make a speech, but I shay I can! I shay I can! I shay——"

"Yes, yes, I know."

"I can make a speech shame as Joseph Chamberlain. You just lemme git started once, and I'll bring down the house. Mishus Bowser——"

"Come, dear, it's time to go to bed," she interrupted.

The words sent him along to the last stage. A feeling of ugly obstinacy came over him, and, pounding on the table with his fist, he shouted:

"Mishus Bowser, you can't trick me!"

"No one is trying to trick you, dear."

"No, madam, you can't do it! You want to get me upstairs and assassinate me, but you can't do it! I know you. You've tried to kill me fourteen different times, but you can't do it. I'm going to sit here for three years, I am."

She made no reply, and after looking about in a vacant way for a minute he burst out with:

"No, I ain't either. I'm going down to the club."

He rose up and lurched out into the hall, and she followed and coaxed and intreated, but as she got hold of his hat he turned on her with:

"Woman, shay no more to me! Zhis is not a happy home, and I'm going down to the club. Leggo my arm!"

As he fumbled at the door some one came up the steps, As he opened it he collided with a man. They grappled in the collision, swayed to and fro for a moment, and then Mr. Bowser fell backwards into the hall and dragged the man with him. There was a mix-up and yells of surprise, and then the stranger broke loose, and without waiting to pick up his hat he went down the steps and over the fence like a midnight shadow.

Mrs. Bowser closed the door and looked down upon the fallen. He was snoring where he fell. Descending to the cellar, she knocked the spigot out of the summer drink cask, told the cook what she would have for breakfast, and as she passed upstairs for the night she turned down the gas everywhere and left the slumberer to the gentle darkness of peaceful sleep.

M. Quad.

[Next Week: Mr. Bowser becomes a Transmigrationist.]

THE WOOING OF MISS EMILY.

How a Valentine Won a Lover.

She had loved him long, and now she was no longer young.

But she carried with her the perennial spring which abides in the hearts of such faithful lovers.

Age was as the ripple in the brook. It passed and left no trace on her heart. She still wore her hair in little curls, as of the fashion decades back. The curls were thinner, but the bright brown hair had dropped so gradually she did not notice it. She believed that a woman should be won. That an unsought glance was a stab at true maidenhood, and while the bloom was on her delicate cheek she had been so shy with these same fleeting looks that she had repelled many a suitor.

Now she was fifty, with a heart still fluttering, and a mind slightly inclined to sentimentalise.

She had a scrap book, whose sacred pages were visited only by her gentle eye, in which she had copied, in a faint, cramped hand lines of her own composing: An "Ode to November," "A Maiden's Love Song," a "Sonnet to a Withered Rose," and verses appropriate to the seasons.

She lived in the smallest house in the village, and the cleanest, and in the summer embowered herself in trailing vines and sweet-scented blossoms.

She wore a large sun-bonnet, in which her small face could be faintly seen, like a dim moon immersed in cloud.

As I have said, she loved him, and why should I say more of him?

He might have been to you a commonplace man with a retiring disposition.

Words further you would not have wasted.

That he had been unfortunate in some ways might have been added. In youth he was tied to the bedside of a fond, selfish, invalid mother, who besought him often in her paroxysms of pain never to leave her: "It won't be for long, John, and I can't live without ye."

He had waited with the patience that characterised his life in after years, and she had lived, as the weak often do, to the allotted age of man, and had died, leaving him middle-aged, with two maiden sisters who had grown into the thought o him as part and parcel of their lives—tyrannising over him in the gentle but all-powerful way in which frail femininity balances the scales with her oft-time tyrant, man, ruling severely the gentler spirits among them. "John must do this," and "John certainly ought to weed that flower-plot to-day," and "John will take the plate of cakes over to old Miss Tomkins." John, still feeling mentally his knickerbockers and turn-down collars of years gone by, went at their bidding.

Once he had gently hinted that he had thought, when younger, of bringing a wife home to the old place. "It'd be company for ye," he had insinuated. Celia, the oldest, had settled it emphatically. "Well, John, 'there is no fool like an old fool.' What do you want to get married for? You're too old; and who d'ye ever court? Besides, what's to be done with us?"

But Ellen, the younger and more tender-hearted, had retired behind her spotless apron and cried quietly.

The last argument was the most powerful. Big as he was, he had a child's heart. A woman's tears won the severest battle.

Besides, how did he know she loved him? She had never looked at him. But for years there had lingered a vision with his dreams. He could see it yet.

A long dewy lane. At the farthest end a slender figure, with down-cast eyes, coming down the narrow path.

She had golden-brown curls at each side of her small head, and the colour in her cheeks was like the heart of the blush-rose by his mother's gate. She had a bouquet in her hand, which he supposed she was carrying to old Mrs. Pemberton, across the far meadow.

He, big ungainly fellow, was almost inclined to turn back as he saw her approaching.

She was most inclined to fly as she saw his broad shoulders growing more distinct as the distance grew shorter.

But neither fled, and they met under the widest tree in the lane.

"How d'ye do, Miss Emily?" he faltered, wondering why he couldn't tell her how sweet she looked, standing there in the clear light in her blue dress, her big straw hat hanging by its strings on her neck.

"How do ye do Mr. John?" she had timidly responded, and even then felt that womanliness pointed to her moving on,

"Pleasant day," was his next original venture, snatching at the time-worn subject as a pretext for a longer look at her pretty cheek's curve. And as he saw her departing: "What pretty flowers. Oh, give me one!" he ejaculated, in true lover's despair.

She had lifted those sweet eyes to his, then, with the loveliest

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look he had ever seen, had handed him the homely forget-me-not, and they had separated.

She, with keen shame at her "avowal," as her prim little heart had named her surprising act, for did not forget-me-not mean "true love"? How could she have done it? How could she, how could she! And that night she had written a poem, which was in a high degree plaintive, commencing:

"Oh, maiden, steel that heart of thine," and ending: "For if he love thee, thee he'll tell," over which she shed many a ponsive tear.

He, of course, manlike, with the primitive simplicity which belongs only to that period and that mode of life, saw in the flower no hidden meaning. With his equally shy nature, he saw instead a rough, unscented blossom, given by a hand which pulled it from its place beside a fragrant rose, the colour of her cheeks.

What could have betokened more plainly her feelings?

He, too, had passed a sleepless night. He had made no "poetry," but had put aside in the long hours what might have been the poetry of his life.

* * * * *

Now they were elderly, but they did not feel it.

Life flowed so gently in those quiet country villages that days and weeks glided by, only noted by the dropping out of some aged landmark, or by a new arrival from the land of Nowhere.

Still Miss Emily jotted down her bits of poetry, and still John "tended" the farm, and went to the market town for provisions.

If he had passed the house while she worked among her flowers she kept the huge bonnet over her face, or rose primly and withdrew to the kitchen, for had she not once given him a glimpse of her heart?—the privacy of "that sacred dwelling-place of love," as she termed it, should not again be disclosed.

He naturally attributed her action to dislike or indifference, and the gulf seemed widening with years.

It was now approaching Valentine's day.

Miss Emily kept accurate notes of all births, deaths, anniversaries, and holidays in her long-time friend and companion, the scrap-book.

As was natural with a maiden of life-long attachment, St. Valentine's day carried for her a peculiar charm. She had written various valentines, the high flush not leaving her cheek until she heard them go, puff! up the kitchen chimney; but on this particular day she had been more than usually poetical. She had, as if moved by a compelling power outside her own, carefully written some verses with the title "To my Valentine."

After it was laboriously copied she had a sudden revulsion of feeling. What was it all for? Here she had thought "beautiful thoughts," and written them down year after year, with no one to tell her they were good; and then her fancy turned towards what might have been. If there could have been a familiar figure sitting in the arm-chair opposite! Here she picked up an envelope, lying with her writing materials, and carefully addressed it.

"For one moment I will see that name on paper," she exclaimed, with a fierce little motion. "What if this were going to him," and she, blushing nervously, folded the little billet carefully, and placed it in the envelope.

Some starved cord in her heart twanged mournfully.

"I'll leave it there a little while," she murmured, as she rose to place the immaculate china on her small table, for she mustn't forget she was to have her little Sunday-school scholar, Lucretia, to tea.

Her table was a more poetical expression of herself than her lame poetry. Her spotless linen, her thin china, her crusty loaf of fruit cake of a recipe handed down by her grandmother, the golden butter—all formed an appetising picture to the little tow-headed girl, in whose honour the feast was spread.

One incident only marked this visit with interest.

When Miss Emily was neatly clearing up the table after Lucretia's small stomach had been satisfied, the demure little maiden with the smooth hair—as she sat with her copper-toed shoes close together, and her small eyes roving—noticed a narrow, white envelope lying addressed on the slim-legged writing table. Being the eldest of a large family, and, in consequence, never without a strong feeling of responsibility, she mumured to herself: "Now, Miss Emily has forgotten to post her letter. I'll surprise her, and post it myself." So saying, she slipped it in the capacious pocket of her Sunday gown, and smiled with complacent shrewdness at the thought of Miss Emily's surprise when she discovered her "thoughtfulness.

And Miss Emily was surprised.

A passer-by in the small hours of the morning—if there ever were passers-by at that hour in this quiet country village—might have seen a spark of light like an eerie and restless spirit shining here and there in the little house. It was Miss Emily and her tallow dip searching for the lost valentine, which she "must have mislaid," she kept repeating in her precise fashion.

* * * * *

It was the day after St. Valentine's, and the winter sun shone frostily through the bespangled panes of John White's chamber window. It beheld a man in all the throes of unaccustomed letter writing. A "Ready Letter Writer" lay open before him, and he alternated between bursts of natural feeling and recourse to the "R. L. W." He emerged at midday, exhausted and triumphant.

THE LETTER.

Esteemed Friend,—It is with feelings of profound emotion that I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well, hoping you are the same.

I got your valentine. It was too long a-coming. I've allers loved ye and allers shall.

I ain't much on letter writing, but may I come and see you and explain things.

Yours till death,

John White.

There were those in the village that laughed at this antiquated love affair, but two hearts were contented.

It was "the new mune wi' the auld mune in her airms."

Walter Parsons.

She Rode One with Four Legs.

The Major (rocking Nelly on his knee, for Aunt Mary's sake): "I suppose this is what you like, Nelly?" Nelly: "Yes, it's very nice; but I rode on a real donkey yesterday—I mean with four legs you know."

That Would Give Him a Shock.

Doctor: "If your husband's hiccoughs don't stop very soon, madame, he'll be a dead man. There is only one thing to be done; he must be startled out of them. Can you suggest any way?" Anxious Wife (thoughtfully): "I might tell him that I had decided not to order that new silk dress."

Experience Teaches.

He: "My dear, I believe I shall sell a piece off our frontage." She: "Why, Charlie? You said when you bought the place you would never sell an inch of that lovely lawn, even if we were starving." He: "My love, at that time I had never had any experience in running a lawn mower."

Hadn't Heard She Was Dead.

Lady (to applicant for position as domestic): "My goodness! This reference is signed by Mrs. Upton!" Applicant: "Yis, mum; she signed it herself, mum, after I'd been there a week, mum." "But Mrs. Upton has been dead for twenty years." "Is that so? Wull, wull! It's wan place afther another Oi've been gettin' on that char-act-ter fur twenty-foive years, an' Oi never heard t efore that the poor leddy was dead. Heaven rest her sowl!"

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Closing date, Tuesday, April 22nd.

SHORT STORIES

NAME HUNTING COMPETITION.

NAMES OF BRITISH AND IRISH TOWNS.

First Prize - - £10. Second Prize - - £2.
Third to Sixth Prizes - - £1 each.

ALL COUPONS APPEAR IN SHORT STORIES.

Below will be found ten sets of words, each set describing the name of a town of over 5,000 inhabitants in the United Kingdom.

Write down in the spaces provided the names of all those places you can discover. If you can't find all, put down as many as you can.

Note These Facts. . .

1. **Names must be written in ink.**
2. **Only one name is allowed against each set of words.**
3. **When you have filled up your list, cut it out and pin it to the other three lists, and then post all in an envelope marked "Towns," to the Editor, "Short Stories," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., to arrive by first post on Tuesday, April 22nd.**
4. **You may send in as many sets of lists as you like, but each set will be accepted independently, and must be pinned together.**
5. **In the event of the prize being divided, only one share will go to each successful competitor, no matter how many duplicate attempts he may send in.**
6. **No competitor may receive the assistance of professional competition solvers whose advertisements appear in the Press. Every person who enters for this competition must do so only on this understanding, and those selected as winners may be asked to satisfy us that they have not contravened this condition.**

The first prize of £10 will be given to the reader from whom we receive coupons containing the greatest number of correct solutions. The second prize will be given to the sender of the next most nearly correct solutions, and so on. In the event of a tie, the prizes will be awarded at the discretion of the Editor, whose decision is final.

LAST LIST. Cut to edge—>

Example:

To exclude monarch..... Barking.

31. Artful secrecy; avaunt!	31	.....
32. Peas that come early	32	.....
33. Separate a country	33	.....
34. Auction	34	.....
35. To feed on	35	.....
36. To beat small	36	.....
37. To scatter	37	.....
38. Wide steps	38	.....
39. A small brook.....	39	.....
40. To cringe in a battle	40	.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Cut to edge—>

ANOTHER HUGE COMPETITION WILL BEGIN NEXT WEEK

HARLEY BOYD'S TRIUMPH.

Tracking a Thief to Win a Girl.

A swarthy featured, middle-aged man entered the offices of Dwight and Ramsey's detective agency in London, and was greeted warmly by the junior member of the firm, John Ramsey.

The visitor was small in stature, but his lithe figure, quick, nervous tread and piercing black eyes, easily portrayed him to be a man not to be trifled with. He was the head of the British Secret Service Department.

"I want a man, Ramsey, who is practically unknown as a detective. We have tried to unearth this diamond smuggling business with the regulars long enough. They are too well known, and I have decided to try an outsider."

Ramsey thought a moment and then replied:

"We have just the man you want. He is a young chap, only been with us some six months, but long-headed, shrewd, brave, and yet so cautious and modest in his general bearing that he might easily be mistaken for a young preacher. He is in the outer office—I will call him."

In response to the summons, a tall young man of some twenty-five years entered the room.

After the introduction the stranger said:

"Mr. Boyd, I want you to take a trip to the Continent. Can you be ready to start to-morrow?"

"Easily, sir," was the reply.

"Well and good. A party by the name of Dexter Slye has made a good many trips across the water in the interests of someone whom we are anxious to discover. We are positive that Slye purchases immense quantities of diamonds on the other side and has them with him when he boards ship. We have never been able to discover a single article of contraband among his possessions.

"Slye will take passage on the same ship with you. Don't lose sight of him until he gets back to Dover, and move Heaven and earth to discover his method of operating. If you win there is a big reward and fame awaiting you. If you fail you will be only one of many," said the chief kindly.

Necessary arrangements were then discussed and settled, and Boyd left the office to call upon Miss Violet Haverly.

Colonel Haverly was a widower with one child, Violet, and lived in a beautiful house in Kensington.

Dexter Slye and the man who was shadowing him became fast friends before the passage was half over. Boyd had told him that he was simply going abroad for a little recreation.

"I didn't know but what you were another 'tec in disguise," said Slye. "If you are, I will tell you now that I buy and sell diamonds. How, when and where I dispose of them is my business."

Slye was well aware of the identity of his companion, but he kept it to himself. They visited Paris, Amsterdam, and Berlin and various other places in company, by Slye's invitation, and the smuggler purchased stones to the amount of at least £20,000, news of which was regularly cabled by Boyd.

Boyd wined and dined Slye sumptuously with a faint hope that he would let slip a word that might help to unravel the mystery, but it proved futile. Wine failed to unloosen his tongue and Boyd was in despair. They came back home together by the same steamer, and Slye showed Boyd the glittering fortune stowed snugly in a small black handbag.

"I will pay the charges on all that they find," he had said laughingly to Boyd.

The voyage was nearly ended and the steamer was passing a fleet of small fishermen, when Boyd saw his man do something that looked suspicious. Slye was leaning far over the rail and after casting a hasty look around to see if he were observed, he let something drop into the sea. Hastening aft, Boyd saw a huge white life preserver floating on the water. It was one of the circular kind blown up with air.

As it dropped quickly astern he rushed to the captain. He had already shown his credentials to the captain, who at his request slowed up his vessel and allowed a boat to be lowered with an officer and four men to go with him. Slye begged to be allowed to go, but he was refused.

As the boat was rowed swiftly towards the floating white object as it tumbled and rolled in the choppy sea a small fishing steamer was seen coming towards them at full speed. Then something flashed across Boyd's mind. A few moments would tell him the truth.

He promised the crew five pounds apiece if they reached the object first, and they bent to the oars with a cheer. The little steamer was too far away, and with his heart almost in his throat Boyd leant far over the boat's bow and grasped the life preserver.

"Here, that belongs to me!" shouted a man from the deck of the little steamer a minute later, as she came rushing along up to where Boyd's boat was lying still and motionless except for rising and falling with the sea. "A friend of mine threw it over for me. You will see it addressed to Captain Rufus Blanchard, Grimsby, steamer *Wild Pigeon*," he continued.

But Boyd did not hesitate. With his jackknife he ripped the preserver open and found a narrow piece of inch rubber hose running through the centre. Another rip and slash and the diamonds were brought to light.

"All right, Captain Blanchard, I will come aboard," said Boyd gleefully.

When he climbed over the rail he motioned for the boat's crew to follow, which they did with alacrity. Only three men, hard-looking characters, were found beside the captain on the *Wild Pigeon's* deck, and Boyd placed them all under arrest, and ordered the steamer headed for the cross-channel vessel, with the boat in tow astern.

"Mister, come down inter the cabin a minnit, will you?" said Captain Blanchard to the detective, as they were steaming along towards the larger vessel. "I've got suthin' I wanter say to ye."

Boyd followed him down into the cosy cabin.

"I didn't intend to git in any trouble, mister, jest pickin' up that thing and kerryin' it to Grimsby," began the captain.

"Well, it looks something like it, sir," replied Boyd.

"I own a commandin' interest in this little fishin' steamer and have got a family. That feller paid me pretty well and said I wouldn't get inter any trouble, so I did it," whined the captain.

"Who was it that hired you?" asked Boyd.

"A feller by the name of Slye. I was to lay off here waiting for the ship that he would cross in—you see he allus sent me a telegram to Dover before he started. Then I jest picked the belt up, put it in a box after I got to Grimsby, and sent it by special messenger to London to Slye under the name of John Johnson, 34 Kilmer Street."

"Supposing the ship came along after dark, how would you work it then?" asked Boyd.

"Well, we'd sight the ship's lights, give one long blast and two short ones ourselves, to let Slye know we was near, and lay to. He had a time electric machine that would burn a small, bright light after about half an hour, that was fixed on an iron standard on top of the preserver. Then he ballasted the thing underneath to keep it upright.

"If 'twas a thick fog, he had an electric whistle attachment that would blow steady half an hour after it was throwed overboard. You see he never used to go over only in the summer time, so we never struck any big storms and never lost a package. He is a pretty smart feller, that Slye," and the captain wiped the sweat from his forehead as he sat back in his chair with a sigh.

"I will see that you are not very severely dealt with, as you have done what you can to repair the damage," said Boyd. "But we shall want you in London for a witness."

Slye was nearly crazy aboard the cross-channel boat as he saw that he had made one voyage too many. As the fishing steamer arrived alongside, Boyd made arrangements with the captain to allow his fourth officer and the boat's crew to take charge of the *Wild Pigeon* to London, and he beckoned to Slye, who, shivering and pale as a ghost, followed him to his cabin.

"Well, Slye, it's all up, it seems," said Boyd, taking a chair and motioning to the smuggler to follow suit.

"Confound you, yes," growled Slye, as he glowered at the detective with looks that would have killed him had it been possible. "I was a fool not to have waited until you were below," he muttered.

"It would have been more to your advantage," said Boyd, with a smile. "Now, who is in this, Slye?"

"How much is it worth to know?" was the answer.

"If you make a clean breast of it, it may lighten the term of sentence," said Boyd.

"I have not been convicted yet," said Slye grimly. "The prison was never built that will see me."

"What do you mean?" asked Boyd, slightly startled.

"I will tell you this much," said Slye, ignoring the question. "The man who has received the greatest benefit is a party you are well acquainted with." And he whispered a name to Boyd that brought him clean out of his chair. "He didn't know the whys, nor whens, nor wherefores, but he has backed the business for three years. No man living, with the exception of Captain Blanchard and myself, knew how the trick was done, and he didn't know what was in the life preserver. He judged that it was something valuable, of course."

Finally he rose and went on deck without saying a word. Boyd followed him. The diamonds had been placed in the ship's strong-room for security. The ship was just off the pier head as Boyd reached the deck.

Then there came a startling episode. Slye jumped to the rail, and before any one could stop him, although a crowd was watching him, he pulled a revolver, pressed it against his breast, fired and fell into the sea.

Mr. Ramsey and the chief of the Secret Service met Boyd on his arrival, and were dumfounded at the tale which they heard. It smacked of the miraculous, but a sight of the diamonds proved it to be no fairy story.

The chief was jubilant and lauded Boyd until that young man felt that he had at last assumed gigantic proportions among those of his profession. The £2,000 reward offered by the Government would also be his, and Boyd felt that he was well qualified in financial standing to take a wife.

He said nothing to his superiors about the name whispered to him by Slye—he was saving that for a future occasion if need be.

The old captain gave his testimony when the authorities confiscated the diamonds and he was allowed to go free.

The day after his arrival Boyd called upon Miss Violet Haverly at her home. Her father met him at the door and he was evidently greatly agitated about something. He was about to slam the door in the detective's face when something he saw glistening in the deep blue eyes facing him caused him to pause.

"I gave you to understand, sir, the last time I saw you, that your presence in my house was not desired nor would be tolerated," he said in a passionate voice.

"I would like to see you in your library, Colonel Haverly. Or, rather, perhaps, that you would like to see me there," said Boyd smoothly, but with a something in his voice and manner that the bluff colonel dared not disobey.

"Very well, sir. You may come in, but make your stay as brief as possible. My daughter is in her room," he replied.

"I will see your daughter later," said Boyd. "My present business is with you."

"Now, sir, what is your business with me?" said Colonel Haverly pompously.

"I desire to wed your daughter, sir. I came here to ask your consent—partly," said Boyd.

"If that is your business, I will ask you to get outside this house instantly," he said, when he could catch his breath sufficiently to talk. "Refuse, and I will have the footman throw you out."

"I think not, sir. Sit down, Colonel Haverly," said Boyd. "I said that I came here to get your consent to marry Violet. We love each other. I am not a pauper, although not rich, and I have an honourable profession," said Boyd, looking the rich man squarely in the eyes.

"Go on," growled the Colonel.

"Have I your consent?" said Boyd.

"Never!"

"I believe you were acquainted with a party known as Dexter Slye?"

"What are my acquaintances to you, sir?"

"You are evidently aware that he committed suicide off Dover pier two days ago," said Boyd.

"I am."

"I discovered his method of operating," said Boyd quietly.

"What's that you say?" and Colonel Haverly was white as a sheet. Then he forced a laugh. "But why should that interest me?" he concluded.

"Slye's secrets did not die with him," said Boyd imperturbably. "He was too poor a man to have the capital to buy £20,000 worth of diamonds."

The Colonel dropped heavily into a chair.

"Shall I ring for Violet and tell her that we have your consent?" said Boyd, watching his man narrowly.

"Did Slye's secrets die with him?"

"In case I marry your daughter, sir," said Boyd. "The Government is amply repaid, or I should look at the matter differently."

"You may ring, Mr. Boyd," said the Colonel hoarsely.

George A. Baker.

5/- a Day for Life!

Do you realise what this means?

To the average man who has to work for his living—be he professional man or workman—nothing is so uncertain as business. Few of those who read these remarks can say without hesitation that they will, this time next year, be receiving as much money as they are now getting.

A sudden accident that deprives him of the use of a leg or an arm, or of eyesight, may prevent a man from continuing his work for weeks or for months, or maybe forever.

How grand, therefore, would it be to know that for certain the sum of five shillings would reach him every day of his life, and keep him, if not in luxury, at all events, in comfort.

This munificent prize is offered in a competition of which full particulars will be announced shortly. Meanwhile, all you have to do is to endeavour to realise in your own mind what five shillings a day would really mean to you.

Are you a Single Girl?

It will keep you in comfort for the rest of your life—should you never marry.

Are you an Engaged Girl?

It will if judiciously saved, buy your trousseau and help to furnish your new home.

Are you a Married Woman?

It will keep you in new hats and costumes and enable you to enjoy many little luxuries for which you may have long yearned. If you are, however, of a saving disposition, you can put by for the little ones.

Are you a Married Man?

It will pay your rent, rates, taxes, coal, servant, and keep you in clothes into the bargain. Not for one year only, but for the rest of your life.

THINK OF IT!

5s. a day for Life!

Circumstances Alter Cases.

A Tale of Two Rivals.

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"What are you laughing at?" asked Dick Grahame of his friend Harry Drew.

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the only reply for fully half a minute. "Excuse me old chap, I know it seems rude, but circumstances alter cases, and you must forgive me in this *case*."

"What is your case?" asked Dick in a slightly heated manner. He felt that the laugh was more pointed at him than he at first supposed.

"Now then old chap, don't lose your topknot, I can't help being amused, because——"

"Amused at what? If you would explain I could join in the fun," Dick said sarcastically.

The two friends were sitting in Dick's rooms—where they had often sat before—but lately an unaccountable stand-offishness and want of frankness had crept in between them, so that the nature of the laugh jarred somewhat on Dick's nerves.

"'Hang it all, man!" exclaimed Harry Drew, "you do like to catch a fellow on the sharp side. I will tell you what I was laughing at, and it will in all likelihood satisfy you and settle the case. Our mutual friend, Miss Ruy—well, she has fooled us all."

"Fooled us all? What do you mean?" asked Dick hotly.

"What I mean is this," said the other coolly, "that she is going to get married." Dick started—"We all thought, more or less, you the more, that we were in the running. Now she has suddenly made up her mind to marry a *man* as she says. Of course——"

"'But listen one moment," said Dick, "how does this affect me, what have I got to do with the matter?"

The other looked at Dick in affected surprise.

"Why, I thought you were as sweet on her as could be, and excuse me, I was thinking in that direction myself, but stood off when I thought you were first."

"Me?"

"Yes, you, but anyhow I met her the other day when she told me of her coming marriage, and in my surprise I blurted out 'What will Dick Grahame say when he hears of it, he will get a surprise.' She stiffened her chin and replied in her haughtiest manner, 'Mr. Grahame was nothing to me, and I am surprised that he has the unbecoming audacity to think so,' and she sailed away and left me standing like an ass. You know, she has never been the same since she had that money left her. Now, I was laughing a few minutes ago at the thought of nearly all our fellows tumbling over each other, so to speak—and you among them—to get into the good graces of Miss Ruy, and now she coolly walks off with a stranger."

"I suppose she can marry whom she likes," replied Dick stiffly. "There is one thing, Miss Ruy could not have married us all, so it is probably the best thing to do to marry outside the circle and make us all alike."

"But you? I thought you might have felt it most."

"Is that why you laughed so loudly?" asked Dick, who did not like the tone of the other's voice. "I may tell you Miss Ruy was nothing to me, and I am surprised at your thinking so."

A gleam of satisfaction came into Drew's face, as he thought to himself, "that's number one settled." And hastily taking his leave he chuckled to himself as he walked along the street.

After this the two friends seldom or never met, they seemed to think by common consent that it was the most desirable plan. When they did meet, Miss Ruy's name was never mentioned, greatly to the relief of both, which however arose from different causes. Dick Grahame did not know that Harry Drew was as often in Miss Ruy's company as he could find excuse for. While Grahame, who would not for worlds look near her, after the callous manner in which she had spoken of him, and though he told himself it was no interest of his, nevertheless he found himself scanning the papers for news of her marriage, and was not a little surprised as time passed on to neither see nor hear any word of the same, and he would not submit to try and make inquiries, as, of course, that would show that he was interested in the matter.

Meanwhile, Harry Drew was trying to make headway in his attentions to Miss Ruy, but up to the present he could not tell himself he had met with much success. One evening he called at her house, and during ordinary conversation she suddenly said, "Do you ever see Mr. Grahame, Mr. Drew?, I have not seen or heard of him for a long time now. I wonder how he is getting along, do you know, I often think about him."

This was not very encouraging for Drew, but he smothered his thoughts and replied, "I have not seen him lately. The fact is, we are scarcely on the same friendly terms as we used to be, and we are, I am afraid, gradually drifting apart."

"I am sorry to hear that," replied Miss Ruy, "Dick was such a nice, jolly fellow, and I always thought you were bosom friends or 'chums'—isn't that the word?"

"Yes. But one even has to give up one's chum when reason dictates he should," replied Drew, with a martyr's smile overspreading his face, "and certain things happened to cause me to think that such must be the case."

"You never told me this before," replied Miss Ruy, with a look of profound astonishment and decided regret. "What was the cause of your disagreement? Do you know I often thought Dick"—Dick again while he was only Mr. Drew—"stayed away when he heard those absurd rumours about my supposed marriage; have you ever found out what or who gave rise to them?"

"I have," replied Mr. Drew in a serious tone and a look of sympathy, "and that is just what applies to the question you first asked me."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that, now you have given me a chance to speak, I will honestly tell you the whole facts as given to me, even at the risk of gaining your displeasure."

"Is it about Dick—I mean Mr. Grahame?"

"It is about Mr. Grahame, as you now call him, and if you will listen to me I will tell you the cause of our parting, so to speak."

"Yes," and Miss Ruy settled herself as if prepared to hear something unpleasant.

"One night," began Mr. Drew, "I was in the rooms of Mr. Grahame, and in the middle of the conversation, he suddenly burst out laughing. On my inquiring the reason for the hilarity, he said, 'Haven't you heard the news?' 'No,' I replied, 'what news?' 'Haven't you heard that Miss Ruy is getting married?' and he laughed again. I felt hurt at his manner, and said that I thought there was little to laugh at. In fact, I was half under the impression that he liked you, and when I hinted as much, he laughed the louder and said that was my own fault, that you were certainly after him, but he could not help laughing at the escape he had had."

"Stop one moment, Mr. Drew. Am I to understand that I was discussed in that manner?"

"I am only telling you what occurred, and when I, taken aback as I was at his conduct, asked him a certain question the exact words of his reply were, 'Miss Ruy was never anything

to me.' I was so disgusted that I immediately left his rooms and have not been there since."

Miss Ruy was now red and white by turns, and seemed ready to faint, but recovering hastily, she said, "Excuse me Mr. Drew, I wish you good-night, and pray do not refer to this subject again on any account—good-night."

When Mr. Drew found himself in the street that night there was not much of the chuckle left in him, but instead he felt very uncomfortable, and a dread feeling as of something going to happen.

He had no decided fault to find with the way Miss Ruy had received him, yet he could not deny to himself that he had not as yet made any impression, unless the uneasy feeling he had, that if so, it was on the wrong side.

"Good Heavens!" and the sweat broke over him, "did that look in her eyes, when she said 'good-night' not seem to imply that he was a scoundrel and a liar?"

What if she suspected his story to be false, and they came together and compared notes! What would they think of him? Another thing that now troubled him was, when he thought of the size of Dick's fist and strength of his arm, he already in his thoughts saw the fire in Dick's eye, and heard the resounding whacks which would be his only share of the plot.

The next time he called, Miss Ruy at first refused to see him, but as he intimated that he had something of great import to tell her, she at last consented, but the manner in which she entered the room was enough to convince the most assured that the case was hopeless, and he was painfully aware of the fact. Yet he could not help putting it to the test. "I have taken the liberty, Miss Ruy, of calling on you to ask you a most important question. I—that is—why do you look at me like that?" as Miss Ruy stared at him in a manner that completely unnerved him. "You know, you must know," he began to say, "that I have shown towards you a——"

"Stop! No more of this, Mr. Drew! I know what you would like to be able to say, and complete the nice little scheme you have had on hand."

"Scheme? Really, Miss——"

"I said scheme. You know very well that you have laid a diabolical plot to injure Mr. Grahame, for a reason best known to yourself."

"It was because I loved you. I could not help myself. You know 'all is fair in love and war.' I——"

"I do not think we will discuss the matter further, you have at least admitted as much, and confirmed my suspicions."

But Grahame did say you were nothing to him, and I thought I was quite justified in taking his place."

"Thanks very much," she replied, smiling bitterly. "Your interest in my affairs has overrun your discretion. I will wish you good-day, and, remember, for the last time."

Once more Mr. Harry Drew found himself in the street, using language to himself that would have sounded very rude even through a telephone, and a dog which happened to look up at him as though wondering what was wrong, paid the penalty of his inquisitiveness by getting a sound rap with an unbrella which sent it away apparently trying to howl the "Marseillaise."

A few weeks after, Dick Grahame had a visit from a friend of his whom he had not seen for a long time. This friend carried about with him the delightful and highly polished name of Septimus Brown. Yet he was a "jolly fellow."

"I say, Grahame," he cried, as he shook Dick heartily by the hand, "where the dickens have you got to this last month or two. I thought you had given us the slip entirely."

"I have been taking things quietly," answered Dick, as he returned Brown's warm greeting. "I have not been up to much of late, and wish to lie low for a while."

"Well, well, my friend, if you persevere sufficiently long you may lie lower than you want to. There is nothing kills a man quicker than having only his thoughts and his shadow for company. Now, what I want you to do is this. I am going down to my place at Brighton next week, and on Thursday I am going to give an ice cream show, otherwise a garden party, and you *must* be there, and bring your racquet with you. I can promise you tennis, a refreshment tent and other sports, to rub the cobwebs off you. It is settled I suppose that you accept——"

Dick slowly shook his head.

"Rubbish man! sheer rubbish! I say you must come!"

"Why must?"

"Because, if you don't, you run a chance of regretting it once—and that will be all the days of your life."

"I can't see where the joke comes in, Brown," replied Dick, half smiling at the other's manner. "The fact is, I am fairly out of these affairs and mean to be for some time. I have lost all——"

"Lost fiddlesticks!" cried Brown. "I'll expect you on Thursday without fail, do you hear—without fail."

But Dick only shook his head and said, "I am sorry I will have to disappoint you."

"By-the-bye," said Brown suddenly, "have you seen Harry Drew lately?"

"No!"

"Then you haven't heard the news."

"What news?" asked Dick, becoming interested in spite of himself.

"I'll tell you," replied Brown, putting on as innocent a look as he could muster, "you know what an infernal gossip I always was—and am. Are you aware that Drew has been after Miss Ruy, and ——"

"Then she is not married?"

"Married? No!" said the other, "but if all goes right I have no doubt she soon will be. As I was saying, Harry Drew proposed to Miss Ruy, and——"

"And what?"

"Got kicked for his pains," coolly replied Brown, puffing at his cigar. "But sit down, old man,"—as Dick had risen to his feet in the excitement of the moment, "you seem to take an interest in this affair," and he looked at Dick with lamb-like innocence. "Do you know Miss Ruy?"

"Yes," replied Dick, "but it is some time back."

"Oh, yes, of course," replied Brown. "What has got hold of my senses, yes, yes, what an ass I am. Why, only the other day I met Miss Ruy and she was asking after you."

"For *me?*"

"Yes, that makes me all the more stupid, as I nearly forgot to tell you."

"What did she say?" inquired Dick, with an interest and eagerness that caused his companion to smile inwardly, though he still wore the innocent look.

"She merely said she had not seen you for a long time, and as I could only say the same, there was not much information to be got out of either of us, so I just thought I would run up and see how you were."

"I am very glad to see you, Brown," as a wonderful change came over Dick. "I think I will come out a bit more than I've been doing of late. Anyway, I'll accept your kind invitation to Brighton."

"Right you are, my boy, I knew you had some sense left. There is one thing I promise you, and that is, if you do not enjoy yourself, I will never ask you again."

On leaving Dick's room Septimus Brown took the liberty of calling on Miss Ruy, and intimating that he specially desired her company at a garden party at his place, which invitation being promptly accepted, Septimus Brown took his leave and looked up to the sky with a self-satisfied smile.

The great day arrived, and so did the guests, and the gathering proved a great success in every way.

"How are you, Dick, old man," as Brown and he met. "I want you to make a set on the lawn. I will get the other partners together."

Presently Dick beheld Septimus Brown approaching with—"Good heavens! Miss Ruy——" and before he had time to think they were upon him.

"You have met Miss Ruy before"—coolly—"I'll leave you two to make your own arrangements, while I hunt up the rest," and rushing off in pretended haste, Mr. Septimus Brown was lost to view.

The silence was awful. Dick tried to speak, but his brain

could not, or would not assist him to form a sentence. Miss Ruy stood looking at the grass as though it were the first time she had seen such a thing in her life. At last Dick in sheer desperation said, "You here, Miss Ruy?"

"Yes, and you are here?"

This edifying conversation was stopped by the heaven-sent voice of Mr. Brown, asking them if they were ready.

The play on this occasion was not all that could be desired. Dick fought bravely, but felt he was an utter failure, while Miss Ruy once or twice was nearly giving up the game through feeling unwell. Once Dick put in a word about the weather, but he was not sure what the answer was. His head seemed screwed on the wrong way.

At last there was a pause in the play, when he suddenly blurted out, "I'm glad to meet you again, Miss Ruy." But Miss Ruy had let her racquet fall and declared she was not able to continue the game. The others gathered round, and Dick assisting her to a seat, ran to the refreshment tent for a glass of wine, and then assisted her to a shady seat in one of the side walks.

"I am sorry you feel unwell, the weather is rather warm for tennis."

"Do you think so, do you really sympathise with me? I was always under the impression that I was 'nothing to you.'"

"I think, Miss Ruy, that the quoting of that sentence should be as familiar to you as to me. but there is no use quarrelling over it"—Dick was coming round. "It is past and gone. But I may tell you that I always suspected a certain party of telling infamous lies, and otherwise causing mischief."

"I don't only suspect, but I know it," replied Miss Ruy, with some spirit, "but you must have known that I would never suspect you of any dishonourable action."

"Miss Ruy! May!"

The exclamation escaped Dick so suddenly that he felt somewhat bewildered, but the look that he got promptly brought him to his senses, and he at once proposed to have a walk through the grounds, which proposal was accepted with a sweet smile.

"There they go," said Mr. Septimus Brown to himself, as he smiled and slapped his thigh in evident glee, "I've bagged them."

Alan Macgregor.

Poor Poots!

He had Hard Work to get a Laugh.

Poots is not one who laughs very often. He is a serious man, and his most intimate friends have rarely seen him indulge in a smile unless invited. But the other day, while reading the paper, his eye fell upon the following:

"The most wasted of all days is that upon which one has not laughed."

This set Poots pondering. Was it possible that he had been wasting days all his life, he who was always so careful of his time? He resolved that this waste of time should stop. He would at least get one good laugh out of the twenty-four hours, cost what it might.

So he began to look about for something to laugh at. No sooner had he arrived at this determination than he heard Mrs. Poots' footsteps in the hall.

"Here comes Mrs. Poots," he mentally said, "perhaps she will say something funny that I can laugh at, and at least this day won't be wasted." And he attempted to smile as she opened the door.

But the smile froze upon his lips as he saw the deep cloud on her brow.

"Mr. Poots," she said, in hollow tones, "did you post the letter I gave you last Monday?"

"Yes, yes—that is I think I did."

"You did not, Mr. Poots. I just found it in your overcoat pocket. It was a letter to my mother (sob) telling her to come yesterday without fail, and stay a week with us (more sobs). And this explains why she is not here."

Poots felt inclined to laugh at this, for he hated his mother-in-law, but he didn't dare. He could only elongate his face and express hypocritical regret over his negligence.

But Mrs. Poots was not to be mollified in this way. She began to upbraid him bitterly—said he neglected to post the letter on purpose—because he didn't love her poor dear mother. Through him she would never see her mother again so long as she lived; and then she threw her apron over her head and began to weep hysterically.

He could only pacify her by vowing that he dearly loved his mother-in-law, and promising to telegraph for her at once.

"Poor start for a laugh this morning," muttered Poots, dismally, as he left his house for the City.

Descending the station steps hastily, he narrowly escaped having his eye punched out by an umbrella that the man just ahead of him was carrying on his shoulder. He reviled the fellow's stupidity, who stopped to revile him back, thereby obstructing the way, and a policeman on the landing threatened to arrest them both.

Nothing laughable about that, certainly, except for the bystanders, who showed that they were not wasting their day whatever others might be doing. This brought Poots to a remembrance of what he had set out to do, and he reflected grimly:

"Shall I get no laugh out of anything? Must I, then, waste another day?"

It was plain to him that in order to laugh, he must at least keep his temper, and he resolved that he would, though it was a severe trial to do so, when the ticket-seller shoved back the shilling he proffered with the remark that it was counterfeit. Where was the anticipated laugh coming in, that was to prove that his day was not wasted?

A happy thought struck him. He would buy a comic paper; but as he reflected he had never yet seen any one laughing over a joke in a comic paper, he relinquished the idea and took the next train that came along.

Before many stations had been passed he found himself wedged in between a fat woman on one side and an inebriated man on the other, with no chance of finding a seat elsewhere; and to crown all he was carried far beyond his station before he was able to look out and see what the station was.

He was pretty wrath by this time, but that was nothing compared to his condition when he reached the office, and found that a bill for a large amount had gone to protest on account of the negligence of his book-keeper, and that a house he owned had been burnt down—a total loss because his agent hadn't renewed the insurance.

"Why don't you laugh?" he shrieked, as he surveyed his pallid countenance in the office mirror.

During the day he heard of the failure of a firm that owed him a considerable sum of money, and learnt that the cashier of the bank in which he was a heavy stockholder, had fled to Spain with all the funds.

"If I could only laugh once, perhaps, this day would not be wholly wasted," he moaned ironically, as he wrung his hands without the aid of a patent wringer.

But he did finally laugh. A telegram came from his mother-in-law in response to his own, saying that she could not possibly come that week, and she wasn't able to say when she could come; and the poor man fairly shrieked with joy.

But it was a narrow escape, though, from a wasted day in the life of Mr. Poots.

W. O. P.

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OPENING THE SEASON.

What the Fresh Air Fund has Done, and what it is Going to Do.

On June 20th, 1892, a party of 200 little children, collected from the worst slums of London, boarded a number of special trams, and rode down on them to the borders of Epping Forest. They then alighted, formed into a long irregular line, four abreast, and tramped along to the shelter which had been erected for their reception. Here they enjoyed a hearty meal, and afterwards romped about on the grass and in the cool glades until tea-time. After another substantial meal they were collected and marched back to the trams which carried them to the Shadowland they called "home."

This was the first Fresh Air Fund excursion in the United Kingdom, and was the result of the generosity of those who were readers of *Pearson's Weekly* at that time. From so small a beginning the Fresh Air Fund has developed and increased year by year, until the total number of children dealt with, not only in London, but in all the chief cities of the United Kingdom, was, at the end of last year, 800,000!

During the first season readers subscribed about £800, with the result that 22,000 little children were given a day in the country. Last year the amount spent was £4,617, and 114,000 little ones in different parts of the United Kingdom had a day's outing during the summer months. This year, starting from to-day, we are going to collect at least £4,860, and a minimum of 120,000 children are going to be sent away for a holiday. In order to enable the local committees in the provincial towns and cities to proceed with their arrangements for collecting the children and catering for their food, it has been necessary for the promoters of the Fund to guarantee half the amount—£2,430.

Every year the number of towns benefited by the scheme has been increased, and this year seven new towns are added to the former list, making a total of thirty-two.

These towns have been selected according to population, and every place with 100,000 inhabitants or more is included. Under these conditions such towns as Brighton and Southampton have been brought in, and it may occur to some readers who are in the habit of visiting such places in holiday time, that the objects of the fund are being defeated because the children living there are always getting fresh air. This, however, is a mistake. Representatives of the Fresh Air Fund have carefully investigated the matter, and have proved to their satisfaction that slums exist—some of them terrible slums indeed—even in such towns as Brighton and Southampton. In these slums children live whose existence is very far from happy. They are insufficiently clothed, badly fed, and never get a chance of freedom from their squalid surroundings. The ozone that does you so much good when you run down to the seaside does not freshen the vitiated air of these slums.

The committees of ladies and gentlemen which have been formed in the provincial towns are, of course, unable to carry out the excursions on precisely the same lines as those in London, in consequence of local difficulties. They are, therefore, allowed to spend ninepence on each child in whatever they consider to be the best manner. At the end of the season the secretary supplies to the head office a certificate stating that the number of children allocated to his particular town have been taken for a day's outing, and that the money allowed has been spent in the correct manner.

Although the working arrangements for the provincial cities are carried out locally, the funds are supplied from the chief office in London, to which all subscriptions are sent by readers of this paper.

The whole of the money subscribed is spent in food and fares for the tiny ones, and all the working expenses are equally borne by the Ragged School Union and the Proprietors of *Pearson's Weekly*, the Council of the former having placed its great organisation of that institution at the disposal of the Fund. It will, therefore, be seen that the Fund holds a unique position, all other institutions deducting from the money subscribed whatever is expended in the way of management and office expenses. So that, for every ninepence sent in, one child is given a complete day's happiness.

The sum of £8 2s. 0d. covers the cost of a party of 200 children, including six adults to look after them.

One of the most gratifying features of the scheme is the hearty and practical interest which Colonials and Britishers living abroad take in the little children whom it benefits. Although the Fund closes in October of each year, subscriptions continue to come in through the winter months from every quarter of the globe. Only a few weeks ago no less a sum than £35 came to hand from the non-commissioned officers and men of the Railway Pioneer Regiment in South Africa. This is only one instance among many in which our soldiers have proved their generosity by devoting a portion of their hard-earned savings to alleviating the unhappiness of the little ones at home.

During the coming summer months parties of children will be taken out into the country from the following towns. The number of children placed against each town is the minimum and will, it is to be hoped, be greatly exceeded:

London	41,500	Leicester	2,000	Derby	2,000
Liverpool	5,000	Portsmouth	2,000	Halifax	2,000
Manchester	5,000	Bolton	2,000	Southampton	2,000
Birmingham	5,000	Cardiff	2,000	Belfast	3,500
Leeds	3,000	Sunderland	2,000	Dublin	3,000
Sheffield	3,000	Oldham	2,000	Edinburgh	2,000
Bristol	2,500	Blackburn	2,000	Glasgow	5,000
Bradford	2,000	Brighton	2,000	Dundee	2,000
Hull	2,000	Preston	2,000	Aberdeen	2,000
Nottingham	2,000	Norwich	2,000		
Newcastle-on-Tyne	2,000	Gateshead	2,000		120,000
		Plymouth	1,500		

It depends entirely upon yourself and your fellow-readers whether this year—the Coronation year—will be a record one.

If you feel sufficiently interested in the movement to justify your giving even quite a small sum, will you please address it to the Hon. Sec. of the Fresh Air Fund, *Pearson's Weekly* Office, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., from whom collecting forms can be obtained on application.

All subscriptions will be duly acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*.

Complete in Two Numbers.

Vedo's Golden Collar.

By "AUSTRALIS."

THE THREAD OF THE STORY.

A large fortune is left to Myowne Glenilu by an uncle, on condition that she marries the first man who proposes to her on or after her twenty-first birthday. She really loves Mr. Carlyon, her father's secretary, but Harrison Elliot, who is employed in the office of the lawyer who made her uncle's will, proposes on her birthday, and after consulting her father she decides to accept him, on the assurance that her money does not attract him. Myowne possesses a dog, whose name, Vedo, is fashioned in precious stones on his golden collar.

Ten years later, Myowne, now Mrs. Elliot, is in Melbourne, whither she and her husband had gone after the bank smash, in which her and her father's money were lost.

When the money is gone, Elliot appears in his true light—that of a scoundrel, making no secret now of the fact that he married Myowne for her money. One day Carlyon arrives, bringing the news of Mr. Glenilu's death. During his stay in Melbourne he had discovered Vedo's collar in a pawnshop, where it had been taken when hard times came. He brings it with him and leaves it with Mrs. Elliot.

Elliot comes in shortly afterwards, and, finding the collar, makes a great fuss, and then reveals to Myowne the fact that Carlyon loved her when he was her father's secretary, and he orders her to return the collar. Just then a telegram arrives for Elliot, on reading which he at once goes out. Later on, Myowne picks it up, and this is what it says: "Just arrived from England; at Turner's hotel. If you don't come at once, shall call at your house.—Pauline Marryat."

Hardly has she finished reading the message than a woman appears at the door. She is Miss Marryat. Elliot did not arrive at the hotel, so she has come to his house, and is surprised to find that he is a married man. She starts abusing Myowne, but just then Carlyon appears, and she leaves breathing threats of vengeance.

Carlyon tells Myowne of his love for her, and before going leaves with her an address which, he says, will always find him, and that when she sends he will come to her from wherever he is.

CHAPTER III.

The Postscript.

The sun had set in a sea of golden clouds, leaving the sky rosy red, blushing under the parting glance of the fire-king. The moon, a silver crescent, modestly appeared, and stars, like fairy lamps, dotted the dark blue sky—diamonds set in a royal robe.

Near an open window, watching the beauties of the dying day, a pale, delicate-looking woman stood, to whom each star seemed to look down upon her with the eyes of one whose memory was ever present with her.

"Will he come to me? Shall I see his face but once again?" she sighed. "Ah, the dreary past, five long weary years: with only memory and pain and sorrow. Ah! wealth has brought no happiness."

The room was a very handsomely furnished boudoir. A door from it led to her own bedroom, and the window opened on a well-sheltered balcony, from which the view over Melbourne was very beautiful, extending far beyond the city.

The lady, tired with standing, now took a chair on the balcony, to better enjoy the soft, balmy air, when sounds of voices from below reached her ear.

"You say you wish to know the truth, Mr. Elliot? Surely you can trust me and wait?"

"Dr. Dawsey, I must know what to expect. She has been ill now five years, ever since that fatal day when the unfortunate woman called who most undoubtedly caused this tedious and most expensive illness."

"I presume, then, there could have been no other cause that you might perhaps recall, and thus assist me in my endeavour to effect a cure."

"No, doctor, I know of none. I have, as far as possible, ever had Mrs. Elliot's interest at heart, and sacrificed my hopes and wishes for her happiness. I am living here at a frightful cost, solely because you thought the air would suit her. In all matters I never consider myself and consequently I have always gone to the wall, like a fool that I am."

"Ah! yes; to be sure—certainly—I quite agree with you," thoughtlessly answered the pre-occupied doctor.

"Now, it so happens I am deeply interested in a certain remunerative business which demands all my attention and energy, and this illness is a wretched drag, hampering me at every turn. Doctor, I want you to tell me what you think of the case."

"Your wife may live for years. I can give you no other hope. I have nothing to guide me. Internal injuries are so difficult to get at, and—it is very strange, she does not seem to remember what could have happened. I will run up and see Mrs. Elliot, and look in again upon you before I leave the house."

"May I intrude, Mrs. Elliot?" asked the doctor in a fresh, cheery voice, which carried health and brightness with it, as he knocked at the boudoir door.

"Ah, doctor, is it you?" And Myowne, while speaking, entered the room from the balcony. "I am so glad to see you. Do you know, when I look at you I always think that a good, kind fairy must have had part in your christening, bestowing on you the rare gifts of being able to give to others comfort, trust, and hope."

"Beware, Mrs. Elliot, I cannot consent to bribery of any kind. I am here as a stern man, who will not allow his judgment to be tampered with by a patient, however skilful she may be." And he smiled in a fatherly manner, taking her hand and touching the thin, white wrist. "Now then, just you tell me at once what you have been thinking about. Your pulse is far too excited for my satisfaction." He selected

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a large handsome easy-chair, and ensconced himself opposite to Mrs. Elliot, who was half-resting on the sofa, her face slightly flushed, and a smile flitting over her lips. "I shall ask you a few questions," continued Dr. Dawsey, "and I shall expect a few answers."

"Ah, doctor, I cannot tell anything; please don't ask—don't ask!"

"Now, my dear Mrs. Elliot, permit me. I am an old man. You have told me yourself I remind you of your father, and you remind me of my daughter—God bless her! As it happens, I know from experience that there are some troubles, some sorrows, some—well, some matters certain wives cannot tell certain husbands, and *vice-versa*. Therefore I want you, my dear, to think that your father is near you, and open your heart to me. Believe me, I will never betray your confidence."

Myowne looked up into Dawsey's face with astonishment. "Why, what have I ever said or done? What has betrayed me to make you think I have any trouble?" she asked hesitatingly.

"What but your face, your manner, your illness—everything surrounding you. Doctors should not only prescribe for the patient's bodily health, they should try to cure the mind as well."

There was a silence in the room for some moments, only broken by a handsome clock chiming the hour.

"Ah!" exclaimed Myowne with a start, "Five years ago this very day and hour." Then turning to Dr. Dawsey, she continued:

"Doctor, you told me once you knew something about me and mine; tell me all you do know, and I—I will trust you with the rest."

"I remember in my younger days being acquainted with a gentlemanly young fellow, then studying for the Bar, called Gleniln—your father. I never knew him intimately, but I heard how he left the profession of his choice to take his uncle's place in the great bank. I remember hearing of a failure which crushed him out of sight. Then, leaving the old country, we change the scene to this fair city of the Sunny South. I remember that for a time messages appeared in all papers, asking for someone by the name of Harrison Elliot, as he would hear of something to his advantage."

"Was that the first you heard of us?"

"Yes."

"Before that we had spent years of trouble in New Zealand and here, struggling with poverty."

"Yes, yes, I heard of that. Then came the strange news that your husband's first cousin, a comparatively young man, had died suddenly, and his wealth quite unexpectedly came to Mr. Elliot."

"That happened five years ago."

"I first became acquainted with Mr. Elliot at the inquest held on the body of an English woman who, just after her arrival here, had been found drowned."

"Yes—Pauline Marryat. I was very ill at the time—in fact, I knew nothing for weeks, and on recovering was amazed to find we were rich, living in this house. Tell me about the poor woman."

"There was a letter found in her pocket bearing Mr. Elliot's name, and on that account his presence was required. He was dreadfully shocked, I recollect, for he had been waiting to see her at the hotel for hours, but she never came. A jealous admirer of hers, who had arrived from home in the same boat with Miss Marryat, followed her all day and gave her a watery grave, for which he is now undergoing a life sentence."

"Dreadful! Hardly having left me, to die so fearfully; poor thing! And I spoke harshly to her; but I was so miserable, I think I hardly knew what I said."

"Do not let that trouble you, my dear lady," said the doctor cheerfully; "but tell me all I want to know, all I ought to know, if I am to effect a cure."

"Don't say that, old friend. You know I can never be cured; it is simply a question of time and patience. Tell me the truth fearlessly—I can bear it. Truly, life is not so sweet a thing that I should regret the loss of it. Ah! were it not for a promise that binds me, I would not have helped you to make my life last even this long."

"I knew it from the first, poor child. But he is

The doctor gazed at it with interest; the next moment a cry broke from his lips.

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kinder to you now; forgive me, I heard he was not always so."

"Yes, he is kinder now," Myowne sighed wearily. "Indeed, I fear he blames himself for much that is not his fault."

"Are you quite sure of that?" asked her companion

"Ah! doctor, is this generous?"

"There, there, we will let it drop. You have something else to tell me."

"Yes," softly answered Myowne, while the rosy blush of a young girl mantled her pale cheek, and a glorious light gleamed in her eyes. "But it is so difficult, I—I cannot find words to tell you."

"Then don't try, my dear. I will in some other way find out all you want me to know. Come, cheer up; why, you look as young and blooming as you must have done years ago, when you wore a bridal dress."

Myowne's eyes fell, and the doctor rose to go. "Good-bye; take care of yourself. And mind, send for me directly you need my services. Don't suffer pain uselessly."

"Doctor," said Myowne suddenly, "will you do me a favour?"

"With all the pleasure in life—half-a-dozen, if you'll let me."

"No, thank you; only one. Do you see that little dog's collar on the mantelpiece, behind the clock, hanging on a nail?"

"Yes; a pretty one, too, and of some value," answered the doctor, taking down Vedo's collar.

"Will you take that collar to the address I will give you, and place it in the hands of the person I shall name?"

"I will do anything you wish."

"Thank you, doctor. Ah, I know far better than you how nearly the sands have run through the hour-glass of my life; and there is in this world one—who—" she hesitated nervously.

"I understand," said Dr. Dawsey gently, watching the tremulous lips of his patient. "Go on, my dear."

"Five years ago he gave me his address. I have not seen or heard from or of him since. I do not even known if he is still there or not."

"How do you know he still lives?"

"I know he lives; I am sure of that. He could not die without telling me, and"—she added very softly—"he has not told me so yet—not yet, not yet."

The doctor looked at Mrs. Elliot with a sort of fear in his eyes, but she continued:

"Knowing how short my time is, I hoped his instinct would bring him to me, for I wished it so ardently; but he never came, and I had no means—at least, no reliable ones—of communicating with him."

"You can trust me. Give me the address; I will take any message you may desire to send, and will place the collar in his own hands. Will he understand what it means?"

"He will understand that I remember. Ah, doctor, how can I ever thank you?"

"By getting well and bright. Do that, and I shall be well repaid," answered Dr. Dawsey, trying to smile.

"Here is his name and address," said Myowne, producing a small card carefully folded in silver paper.

The doctor gazed at it with interest. The next moment a cry broke from his lips.

"Carlyon! why, I know the gentleman intimately. He never told me he knew you, though he must have heard me mention your name sometimes. Dear, dear, how very strange!"

"You know him! Oh, doctor! Is he in Melbourne?" asked Myowne, trembling violently.

"He is and has been for the last five years. He did intend returning to England, but suddenly gave up the idea. He lives in the same place where he put up for only a few weeks at first, and said once he would rather pay double its worth than leave it. I chaffed him a bit, and asked him what he would do should the house be burnt down, but he took it quite seriously and answered that, being able to afford it, in such a case he would buy the land and rebuild."

Myowne, who had listened eagerly, gave a sigh of glad content as she recalled the words Carlyon had spoken when giving her his address: "It will always find me, even if it be years hence." How true he had been! For her sake he had remained where she could always find him.

"When do you want to see him?" he asked gently. "And what message shall I take?"

"Tell him I have not forgotten my promise. I will live as long as strength permits for his sake. Tell him he shall know when I wish to see him, for I shall see him once more—tell him to wait a little longer."

Dr. Dawsey could not say anything. He clasped the white hand in his, and, with Vedo's collar resting in his breast pocket left the room, and repaired to his house, entirely forgetting to see Mr. Elliot again.

The next few days Dr. Dawsey, who was what may be termed a fashionable physician, found his time so fully occupied that it was impossible for him to look up Mr. Carlyon. It was fully a week after his interview with Myowne that one morning Mr. Elliot called to see him. The name brought back the recollection of Vedo's collar, and an honest flush of regret came to the old man's face.

Mr. Elliot was just on the point of leaving for Adelaide on business, and he wished the doctor to call and see his wife.

"It would be shocking if anything happened to her while I am away," he remarked. "She said something last night about not being a trouble to me any more when I return; what could she mean?"

"Did she say that?" anxiously queried Dr. Dawsey. "Strange, strange; could the spirit, drawing near to the change, see beyond the veil that dims our limited vision? When do you leave?"

"I go to-morrow to see a friend at Queencliff, and expect to return the day after, to leave for Adelaide the following day. Will you call and see Mrs. Elliot to-morrow while I am gone?"

"I will do so without fail."

"And you'll tell me what you think before I go to Adelaide? It is an awful nuisance having her ill just now. However, I always have had things against me, and I am getting used to it. Good-bye."

And Mr. Elliot left the doctor busy writing a few lines to ask Carlyon to call next day, feeling he would not dare to face Myowne with the collar still in his possession.

Carlyon was not slow in answering the summons. Five years had told somewhat on him. The kindly face was graver, the lines near the eyes and round the corners of the sensitive mouth were deeply graved. Over his whole person there seemed to be cast a shade of sorrow. It was noticeable in the tones of the gentle voice, in the rare smile, even in the listless pose of his head and hand. And his general preoccupation struck the doctor uneasily, as he urged him to take a glass of wine.

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"I have not touched wine for five years, doctor, and I am none the worse for it."

"Five years!" muttered Dr. Dawsey. "So, so—indeed!" he remarked aloud. "I thought you a wiser man than to be obliged to take the pledge."

"I took no pledge—I lost the taste for it one night, and I get along as well without it."

Then there was a pause. Carlyon had become thoughtful. With the eye of the mind he saw again a little room, a well-remembered, graceful figure, and a voice re-echoing like music in his heart seemed again to say the unforgotten words: "I never touch wine now."

The doctor also was thoughtful, reflecting upon the strange message with which he was intrusted. Then in a voice strangely unlike his usual cheery tones he began:

"I asked you to come and see me for a particular purpose."

"Really? I am quite at your service, doctor. Is it another charitable affair? What is it this time—man, woman, or child?" and the faintest smile quivered round his lips, as he spoke.

"A woman," answered the doctor seriously.

"Ah, poor thing. Well, it is good to be rich, if only to be able to help others. How much do you require?"

"This time I do not want money."

It was not so much the meaning of the words that Carlyon noticed, as the way in which they were uttered. His interest was slightly roused, but while Dr. Dawsey hesitated how to proceed, the faint spark died out, and Carlyon relapsed into indifference. But the doctor was now determined to make a plunge, and continued, in a firmer voice:

"I have undertaken to convey to you a message, which—which——"

"Which bothers you somewhat, eh, doctor?" said his friend, interrupting him. "I thought something was wrong directly I saw you."

"What! Are you a physiognomist?"

"By no means; I only noticed that you looked worried, and supposed you wished me to help you in some matter. I need hardly tell you what you know so well, I am always at your service."

"Yes, yes, you are a pearl among men. How often you have aided me in my various schemes to assist the poor and destitute! I cannot think how I would have managed without you."

"Tut, tut! say no more about that. What message have you for me?"

"Only this," answered Dr. Dawsey, drawing from his breast pocket Vedo's golden collar, and placing it in Carlyon's hand.

There was barely a second of intense stillness. Then Carlyon raised his head a new, a transformed, inspired man. The light of hope was in his expressive eyes, a flush of joy brightened the pale face, and a winsome smile, like a sunbeam on a cloudy day, lit up the whole countenance.

"Vedo's collar! Doctor, who gave you this for me? Don't keep me in suspense, I cannot bear it now. I have become so anxious with the long long strain of constant watching and waiting for one word, one sign. Doctor, tell me she lives."

"Gently! gently! Yes, she lives. Why, you excite yourself like a boy who expects to receive his first love-letter. Take it quietly. Your nerves are quite unstrung; I shall have to talk seriously to you, or there will be mischief here." And Dr. Dawsey looked anxiously into the happy face of his friend.

Carlyon was still on his knees beside the couch, watching the face of her he loved.

"There, doctor, I am as grave as an owl—as quiet as a church mouse on its very best behaviour. Would you have me morose and miserable? Shall I not even smile, when my heart is so full of sunshine? Nonsense, doctor, I am happy; and why should I not be so, when my darling lives and remembers me?"

Dr. Dawsey shook his head, and, in a few very carefully chosen words, gave the gist of his conversation with Myowne, at the same time referring to her illness and other minor matters. He mentioned Mr. Elliot, casually and remarked that husband and wife seemed to get along better now, and that the former after his present visit to Queencliff, intended going to Adelaide.

Just then a servant brought a verbal message and a

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letter to the doctor, who instantly opened the letter, and read:

"Dear Doctor, Good Old Friend,—Please come to me. It is time. Bring Vedo's collar with you.

"Myowne."

The five last words before the signature were underlined, and he fully understood their meaning. For an instant Dr. Dawsey hesitated, and watched Carlyon, who, after gazing at the collar, was putting it in his breast-pocket. Then the doctor gave him the letter, simply remarking:

"Read it, and come with me."

Twenty minutes later Dr. Dawsey and his friend had reached "Elliotville." There was a depressing stillness in the house, and the very air seemed heavy with the perfume of flowers from the large conservatory.

A fresh-faced, good-tempered looking nurse met the doctor in the hall, where she had evidently been watching for him.

"Well, Mrs. Parsons, what means this message you sent me just now, requesting me to call and see Mrs. Elliot at once? Surely she is no worse?"

"Bad enough, doctor, though she wouldn't let on. I sent you a letter she wrote at noon. She kept it, hoping you'd call, but when you didn't come, she let me send it. Shall I take you to her room?"

"By all means; lead the way, please," answered the doctor.

As they reached the first landing, Carlyon came close to Dr. Dawsey and detained him. His face was very pale, his voice low and shaken as he spoke.

"Doctor, I must see her; just for one moment. Manage it how you can, how you will; but I must see her. Remember I am a desperate man."

"I cannot allow you to see her at all, unless you promise me perfect calmness and self-control."

"I promise, God help me," he whispered sadly.

The nurse was holding a door open at the end of the well-carpeted passage, and a smart housemaid came from the room, where she had taken Mrs. Parsons' place during her absence.

The doctor spoke to the nurse for a few moments, and then remarked aloud:

"Dear, dear, unconscious, eh? That's bad."

"Yes, doctor, though we did our best to restore her, remedies failed."

"I will see what can be done at once," said Dr. Dawsey, turning to the door.

But Carlyon, who had been listening to every word, stepped forward. By a strong effort of will he was now perfectly calm and quiet, his voice steady, and his face, though still pale, showed no excitement. He drew his friend on one side.

"Doctor, one moment. I have heard all. She is insensible and remedies have failed. Grant me one favour; I will never ask you another. Send the nurse away; come into that room with me, and I believe, Heaven helping me, that I can bring back her sleeping spirit to life again. You will be there to do what need be done, should I fail."

Dr. Dawsey looked in amazement at the speaker, then hesitated, and smiled. He was not a bigoted medical man of the old school, where everything has to be done by fixed rule. His ideas were broad, and he believed it possible to learn a lesson even from the lips of a child. Therefore, his friend's request did not seem extraordinary, but greatly interested him, and after hastily whispering to the nurse to keep within call, he drew Carlyon into Mrs. Elliot's dainty boudoir.

Myowne was lying on a low couch near the open window, through which the setting sun cast his rays of red and gold upon her pale, delicate face. She had evidently not been prepared for her sudden indisposition, for she was dressed in a handsome white morning gown, at the neck of which, among rich laces and ribbons, nestled a bunch of flowers, now crushed and withered.

The two gentlemen stood silently near the door.

"God bless you for this, Dawsey, old man," softly said Carlyon. "If I fail it won't be your fault; but the voice of love should have weight here, and thank heaven, she loves me."

"Remember her husband," whispered the doctor solemnly.

"I will remember the man who bought her, poor darling; who ruined her life, broke her heart, and perhaps killed her. Don't speak of him. Let me go." And, freeing himself from the doctor's detaining hands, he softly went towards the couch, while Dawsey, closely watching him, remained motionless near the door.

Carlyon looked down at the face that for so many years had been his star of hope and love; and with something struggling in his throat and a weight oppressing his heart and soul, he slowly bent down near the couch, till his face was almost on a level with hers. Then he laid one hand on her head, the other on her clasped fingers resting on her bosom, and approaching his lips to her ear, he spoke softly, intently, firmly believing she would hear and answer him.

"Myowne, my darling, speak to me."

He had to repeat the words several times before her hands at last began to move under the pressure of his. Then she opened her eyes widely, and they rested full upon him, with a look of such joy that earth could have no share in it.

The doctor, quite delighted with the success of the experiment, approached and gave the patient a reviving drink; but he looked anxiously into the face, noting something in the eyes that seemed to chill him; and, telling Carlyon so, he turned to a table near by to write a telegraphic message to the husband.

Carlyon was still on his knees beside the couch, watching the face of her he loved with an intensity that would have been painful under other circumstances. Myowne had closed her eyes and seemed to be resting, but as the timepiece chimed six o'clock she looked up again and whispered softly:

"Six o'clock; five—years—ago."

"Ah, I have not forgotten that hour—it will ever live in our memories."

"In your memory, not in mine—unless sweet memory goes with us when we take the long journey through unseen, unknown space, dark and cold; further away a cloud mist, growing thinner and clearer; suddenly a starry splendour, and endless glories stretching away into infinite distance. Then beauteous peace, calm and content everywhere; music such as mortal ear could never understand or realise; happiness, such as we cannot conceive or dream—glorifying, wonderful. But I shall be all alone till you come. I will be near you, and watch and wait for you."

She closed her eyes again. The doctor had written his telegram, read it over hastily to Carlyon, and went to the door to give it, with directions, to the nurse. Somewhere in the neighbourhood a band of a better class than usual was playing "The Last Rose of Summer," and gently, on the evening air, the soft, subdued strains were carried into the room as Myowne again opened

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her eyes. This time she smiled up into Carlyon's face, and the dreamy, wondering look was gone. Gently she raised one white hand, placing it on his shoulder, and slipping the arm round his neck, drew him nearer to her while she spoke.

"Dearest, you cannot break the sweet spell now; it is so late, so late. Speak the words which five years ago I would not hear."

Carlyon, controlling his emotions with difficulty, drew nearer, till his breath fanned her cheek; and very quietly, slowly but impressively, he said:

"Myowne, my dear one, I love you, darling, with all my heart and soul."

"Yes," she murmured tenderly, a glad smile spreading over her face, "I knew it, but I wanted to hear you say it. It is such exquisite music. Remember our old watchword: 'In everything always together.' For all time."

"For ever, and for ever," answered Carlyon, fondly passing his hand over her glossy hair.

A pause, and then a shy, sweet whisper:

"Will you kiss me, my own dearest, just once?"

The words were a mere tremulous sigh, but they reached his ear, and seemed to him like an angel's song.

And Carlyon gently raised the slight figure in his arms, and bent his head till his lips touched hers.

A kiss, soft as a breath, tender and true, life-giving and life-taking. A moment, hardly a moment later, Carlyon raised his head, and Myowne sank back. Then a wild, heart-rending cry, a desolate moan, burst as a wail from his lips.

"Myowne, my own darling! My love, my love! Oh, take me with you. Remember, 'In everything always together,' together for evermore!" And, overcome with grief, he buried his face in her soft, cold hands.

The doctor had considerable difficulty in getting Carlyon out of the way. He feared terrible consequences should Mr. Elliot come and find him there; but, fortunately, all passed off well, and the husband did not return to Melbourne till the next day.

Dr. Dawsey had taken Carlyon to his own house, weak and helpless as a child, and submitting to his will without a word. He was so calm and quiet that a fear possessed the doctor that something dangerous was threatening his friend, and he was very desirous to call in a medical friend in consultation. But Carlyon would not hear of this.

"But, man alive! what ails you?" asked Dawsey.

"Nothing, friend; I am well and happier far than I hoped to be. I will tell you, Myowne has been with me ever since that fearful moment; she never leaves me. I know she is waiting for me, and I know I shall join her. I want to put all things in order, make my will, and then I shall be ready to obey the call when it comes. To you, Dawsey, I shall leave certain monies to be employed for the poor and destitute as you may think fit; for myself, I ask you to promise me one thing."

"I will do anything I can for you."

"When the time comes remember our watchword was, 'In everything always together.' Do you understand my meaning?"

"I understand. Dear, dear! This is very, very painful; you, too, one of my most valued friends."

"Yes, old man, I know, and I am sorry to give you so much sad trouble; but you must promise that she and I will rest together. I shall not mind anything else."

With tears filling his kind old eyes, with his warm, true heart very full, the doctor held out his hand, and in a voice broken with emotion, he gave the desired assurance.

A few months later Mr. Elliot sold off his properties, and went back to England. It was reported that he married again, but, however this may be, he was not seen in Victoria again.

Carlyon lived with Dr. Dawsey, occupying himself with good works. His health was far from good, and he took not the slightest care of himself, facing all weathers and indifferent to discomfort in his desire to benefit the distresses.

He had been ailing for some time past and had given the old doctor considerable uneasiness. But on the first anniversary of Myowne's death he seemed remarkably better. There was a glad light in his eyes, a buoyancy in his step that was refreshing to see, and Dr. Dawsey, congratulating himself that certain new remedies were effecting a cure, went upon his daily duties with a lighter heart. One evening he returned a little later than usual, just in time for his six o'clock dinner. On entering the dining-room he was astonished not to see Carlyon as usual, waiting for him.

"Is Mr. Carlyon out?" he asked the servant.

"No, sir. Mr. Carlyon went to his room about an hour ago."

"Surely he cannot have heard the dinner gong," remarked the doctor, thoughtfully; and after waiting a little longer and feeling uneasy, he decided to go to his friend's room himself. He found him lying on the large sofa that occupied one side of the room and faced the open window, firmly clasping in his hand Vedo's golden collar. At six o'clock he had quietly passed away. It was easy to see how peaceful his end must have been, for the calm face looked very beautiful with its expression of perfect contentment and happiness.

The doctor could almost fancy that Myowne must have been very near him at the mystic hour of his demise, and, indeed, that she called him away with her. As he had wished it, Carlyon found his last rest with Myowne, still tightly clasping in his hand Vedo's golden collar.

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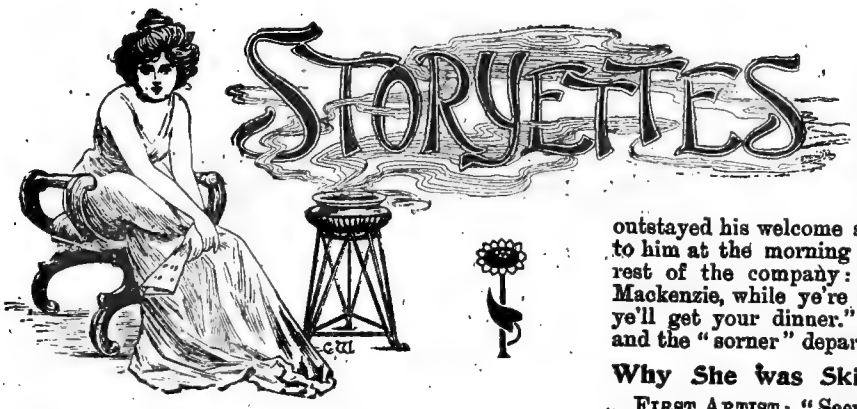

It Was Too High.

"Can you stand on your head?" asked a visitor of little Dudley. "No," he replied, "it is too high up."

He Had Kept Still.

Mother: "How did your face get that strained, agonised look in your photograph? Did the light hurt your eyes?" Small Son: "No, ma. The man told me to keep still, an' I did."

What Would be Left?

A bright little girl who had successfully spelt the word "table" was asked by her teacher what would remain after "t" had been taken away. "The dirty cups and saucers," was the prompt reply.

He Wouldn't Trust Her.

Cumso: "Wait a minute, Fangle. I want to step into the dressmaker's, and pay my wife's bill." Fangle: "Why don't you give her the money, and let her go and pay it?" Cumso: "She'd order another dress."

She Knew What He Wanted.

Tramp: "It is needless to ask you the question, madam. You know what I want." Lady: "Yes, I know what you want badly, but I've only one bar of soap in the house, and the servant is using it. Come again some other time."

Not all Women.

"Are all people that go to America women?" asked little Tommy. "Why, no, my child," said his mamma. "There are a good many men and some little boys, like you, that go." "Then what makes you call them all Emma Grants?" was Tommy's response.

Why He Changed It.

The Gintleman: "No, my man, this is not mine. It was a five-pound note I lost." Paddy: "It was a fi'pun note before Oi got it changed, sor." The Gintleman: "What did you get it changed for?" Paddy: "Och, sure, so the owner could conveniently reward me, sor."

His Future Trade.

A large owner of property scolds his son, who persists in always being the last in his form. "Why, you silly boy, what are you going to do in after-life, if you won't learn anything?" The urchin, casting a sidelong glance at his father's desk, replied: "Well, I shall do the same as you do—every three months, at quarter day, I'll sign receipts for the rent."

A Broad Hint.

It is related of a noble Scottish lady of the olden time, who lived in a remote part of the Highlands and was noted for her profuse liberality, that she was sometimes overburdened with habitual "sorners." When any of them outstayed his welcome she would take occasion to say to him at the morning meal, with an arch look at the rest of the company: "Make a guid breakfast, Mr. Mackenzie, while ye're aboot it; ye dinna ken whaur ye'll get your dinner." The hint was usually taken, and the "sorner" departed.

Why She was Skied.

First Artist: "Seen my portrait of Miss Hylton in the Academy this year?" Second Artist: "Yes." First Artist: "I promised I would paint it for her, you know. Charming girl; in fact, she's a perfect angel." Second Artist: "Ah, I suppose that is why she was skied."

Could a Woman Do It?

Miss Elder: "Well, I maintain that women can do anything men can." Mr. Gazzam: "Oh, no. The auctioneer's business is one women cannot go into." "Nonsense! She'd make every bit as good an auctioneer as a man." "Just imagine an unmarried woman getting up before a crowd and exclaiming, 'Now, gentlemen, all I want is an offer!'"

Something Better Might Come Along.

Daughter: "Mamma, Mr. Black proposed to me last night." Society Mother: "Did you accept him, Ethel?" "Yes, mamma." "Has he any money, Ethel?" "Only five hundred a year, mamma." "Well, Ethel, handle him carefully till the summer. Possibly you may pick up something better during the spring."

Result of "Brain Gymnasium," Nos. 73 to 78.

The prize of £1 1s. has been awarded to the Rev. G. P. Horne, of Lamington, Lanarkshire.

A pencil-case has been sent to each of the following:

Miss E. Samman, 74 Harold Road, Margate; A. Smith, 69 Balmoral Road, New Brompton; Miss L. Smith, 69 Balmoral Road, New Brompton; Miss J. Lawlor, 33 Douglas Street, Cork; W. Barter, 33 Douglas Street, Cork; A. F. Cox, 60 Grantham Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham; F. G. Homer, Richmond Villa, Anderton Park Road, Moseley, Birmingham; D. Welch, 2 Ruskin Avenue, Manor Park, E.; S. J. Bailey, 3 Grove Terrace, Stoke Fields, Guildford; B. Smith, 69 Balmoral Road, New Brompton.

SOLUTIONS.

73. AM-I-ABLE.

74. Pink, Pear, Clover, Pale,
Rill, Stable, Stalo.

75. LON-DON.

76. LENS
EMEU
NEAR
SURFACE
AHOY
COPE
EYES.

77.

R	a	T
O	per	A
B	al	M
E	ch	O
R	ose	S
T	eac	H
B	o	A
U	r	N
R	af	T
N	os	E
S	ta	R

78. O-PINION.

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SAINT INNICE.

The Tale of an Old Maid's Sacrifice.

It was something of an event in Innice Selby's rather commonplace life when Tom Dyrenford, big and handsome, but very pale and still, was carried into her father's house on a shutter, with a charge of birdshot in his breast, and looking for all the world like a man who had not much longer to live.

He was laid on the sofa in the little parlour, all fragrant with the scent from a great jar of roses that stood on the modest centre-table. Innice looked on in a dazed sort of way as the doctor probed after the shot and dressed the wounds. She did what was asked of her in a stupid, mechanical fashion, bringing warm water and bandages, and what-not to the side of the sufferer. She had never before seen a wounded or dead person, and the sight of this young man brought a sense of faintness and sickness to her heart.

How Tom Dyrenford had come to let that unlucky trigger snap just as he was climbing over that gate he never knew. It was an ugly wound, and it kept him in bed four weeks; but there was never a day after he regained consciousness that he did not offer up his thanks to an all-wise Providence for bringing him to that house.

He was a typical man of the world—strong, athletic, but afflicted to the last degree with that nameless weariness—the lack of sufficient ingenuity to discover means of spending a suddenly acquired fortune; and when he awoke to consciousness one morning, very pale and weak, to discover the beautiful earnest face of Innice Selby bending over him, all alight with the eagerness to learn what his slightest wish might be and minister to it, the man's soul was born again within him. He took one long, curious look, and then sank to sleep again, with a childish smile on his face and a sense of utter content at his heart.

For Innice the ensuing weeks were one unalloyed round of perfect bliss. She was twenty-eight years old, and at that age it is something more than a privilege to be permitted to fall in love. She took charge of the invalid as naturally as if he had been a child; and he, for his part, could bear no one else near him. The girl's father, a grey-haired, austere old gentleman, as proud as he was poor, he saw little of, and, truth to tell, he did not grieve much thereat. It was pleasant to lie all day on the little sofa, or in the hammock under the trees, and let Innice read to him by the hour in that sweet, low voice of hers.

Now, there had never been a moment when Tom's wound had been dangerous—that is, not greatly so—only very painful; but, of course, when he began to get strong and well again, he never let a day pass without declaring to this tall, sweet-faced girl that he owed his life to her watchfulness and care. And at the declaration the great serious eyes would light up and the speaker would receive his reward in a look that spoke volumes of love and gratitude.

Like all things that are won easily, the love of this tall girl (whom some of the gossips in the village were already growing to allude to as an old maid) did not influence this pampered young man as strongly as it might have done had it been less readily bestowed. He accepted it naturally and gracefully, with the ease of a practised lover. But there comes an end to all things, and there came a time when there could be no further excuse for his remaining the guest of old Selby.

It was the night before he went away that he discovered how irrevocably the girl's heart was bound up in him. They were walking together under the gold laburnum trees, and she suddenly stopped and covered her face with her hands. Tom gently pulled them away, and discovered that she was crying.

The next instant she was in his arms, and being comforted as a strong man usually comforts a woman who tells him she loves him and thinks it necessary to cry about it. And he himself, feeling, as he did, more deeply in love than he had ever been in his life, surrendered then and there, and when he departed next day it was as Innice Selby's betrothed husband.

Rather to his relief, she had requested him to say nothing to her father. "Please leave that to me," she said. "Father will be grieved or furious—perhaps both. You see I have grown so necessary to him, and I suppose"—with a divine blush—"that he has never given a thought to the idea of losing me. Let me tell him after you are gone."

* * * * * *

The thought of the relationship he had established in that little place was very agreeable to Tom after his return to town. Even after his long rest his old diversions found little charm for him now. His friends rallied him on his listlessness, and more than one of them broadly hintedt hat there must be a woman in the case.

The summer and autumn passed away pleasantly enough. He corresponded regularly for awhile with Innice, and was charmed with the brightness of her letters. When his own began to decrease in number she vexed him with neither questions nor reproaches. It was early in December when she wrote and asked him to come and spend the holidays as her father's guest. "It will surprise you," she added, "but I have not told him yet. I'm a sad coward, I fear, but I have not found the courage. Perhaps you can help me when you come."

A week afterwards she wrote: "I have another surprise for you. You have heard me speak of my little sister. She will reach London on Friday morning, on her way home from school, and you are to meet her, if you will, and escort her here. I know you won't mind, and Gertrude's such a child that we can't endure the idea of her travelling alone."

It was indeed a surprise that awaited Mr. Tom Dyrenford when he repaired to Morley's Hotel the following Friday morning, to meet his *fiancée's* sister—the sort of surprise most men would give a good deal to experience. As the girl rose to greet him her beauty literally struck him speechless. He was dimly conscious of a vision of rose-pink cheeks, of great solemn blue eyes, of a wavy crown of glorious yellow hair. And this was Gertrude, the "child."

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He pulled himself together with an effort, and exchanged some commonplaces with her, after which she retired to prepare for her journey. Dyrenford gave his directions to the servants concerning the luggage and so forth in a mechanical way. The sight of this glowing young beauty—beauty by all odds the most remarkable he had ever seen—had thrown him into a sort of daze. He had not wholly recovered his self-possession until they had driven to Euston and taken their places in the train together.

On the way down Gertrude Selby chatted away to Tom in the most charming way in the world—told him all about her studies, her teachers, her chums. She was just seventeen, though if you had veiled her face you would have taken her for twenty-one, and her manner had all the girlish, innocent fearlessness that men of Tom Dyrenford's stamp find so irresistible.

It was of her sister Innice that she spoke most enthusiastically. "Dear, dear old Innice!" she exclaimed to him with tears in her eyes. "I always call her the saint, because she has been so very, very good to me ever since mamma died. Yes, Mr. Tom—I may call you that, mayn't I? I believe my sister would give her life to make me happy."

Hate himself as he might for it, "Mr. Tom" could not help enjoying his discovery that this exquisitely beautiful child very evidently knew nothing of his engagement to her sister. It was a long journey, and he grew strangely soft towards her as the dusk clouded the windows and she began to nod drowsily. It was the most natural thing in the world that he should place a protecting arm about the slim waist, and pillow the bright head on his shoulder for a nap.

Innice—"Saint" Innice, had Gertrude not called her?—was waiting for them at the little station with a trap drawn by the fat, docile mare that her soul loved. She embraced her "little sister" tenderly, and gave to her lover a greeting that was shy, but inexpressibly sweet.

That night, in the glow of the firelight, Dyrenford was enabled to compare the two sisters closely as they stood with cheeks together and arms interlaced before him. Was it cruel truth or the miserable libel of an overwrought fancy that gave him the impression of the faintest suggestion of crow's feet at "Saint" Innice's eyes and temples?

* * * * *

Dear, dear Tom,—It is now six weeks since you left! I have had but one letter, and that, I fear, not a very satisfactory one. I feel as though the time has come for us to understand each other.

Tom, I implore—no, I command you—to tell me the truth. Do you love my sister?

She has been so different since you went away. She does not come to me with her little joys and troubles any more. She avoids me, too, and when I question her, she is quite cross. More than once I have found her in tears. And, Tom, only last night I stole into her room to kiss her as she slept, and do you know what I found? Your photograph, Tom! It lay upon the counterpane, where it had dropped from her hand as she had fallen asleep. And there were tear stains upon it.

I have thought it was, perhaps, only she that loved you, and that you did not care. But I remember so many things now. Your good-bye kiss to me was a cold one; and Gertrude, you know, would not kiss you at all. She burst out crying and ran out of the room.

Tom, you know that I love you with my whole heart and soul, that every nerve and fibre and atom of your being is so inexpressibly dear to me that I don't see how I could live without you. But I love my little sister, too, and she must not be made to suffer.

You are the only lover I ever had, Tom, and I shall never have another. Be very, very honest with me, my dear boy, and tell me all that is in your heart. If what I think is true I will release you without a word of reproach, though it should kill me.

Innice.

My dear Girl,—Whatever I am, or have been, I am not a scoundrel. You offer to release me. I refuse to be released. I have kept my honour intact heretofore, and do not propose to sully it now. I shall be down by the train that reaches you at eight o'clock on Friday evening, and shall then do myself the honour of begging you to set a day for the wedding. With love,

Tom.

Gertrude Selby had been quite ill for a couple of days; and she was lying asleep on her little bed when her sister stepped in on tiptoe to see her before driving to the station. The girl's cheeks were quite pale, and her hands which lay lightly crossed upon her fair young breast trembled as she slept. As Innice stooped over the bed to kiss the white forehead, two tears stole from beneath the sleeper's lightly-closed eyelids, and she murmured in a half-whisper: "Tom, Tom, oh, my love! When will you come back to me?"

Noiselessly "Saint" Innice stole from the room. In a few minutes her old mare Bess' hoofs were sounding smartly on the smooth, frozen road. The girl looked straight ahead of her as she drove along. Her face was very white, and there was a look in the great, calm eyes that might have given Mr. Tom Dyrenford the heartache if he had been there to see it.

She knew she had plenty of time, and as she neared the railway crossing, half a mile from the station, she pulled Bess to a walk, and letting the reins fall upon the splashboard, pressed her gloved hands nervously to her face. Then tears came. The place was deserted. Not a soul was there to see her weep. Through the tears she gazed far over the frosty fields, thinking long and earnestly of the lover she was going to meet, and of——

There was a jolt and a jar, and old Bess came to a standstill. One of the wheels of the light cart had slipped from the edge of the boarding that served to level the lines with the road and had become wedged against the outer iron rail.

A cut with the whip and a jerk would have ended the difficulty. Or she could have climbed out of the cart and led Bess into the roadway. But she took no such action. She sat there, still and silent, her hands folded in her lap. There was a sort of dreamy resignation in the face that was turned so steadily up to the tranquil stars.

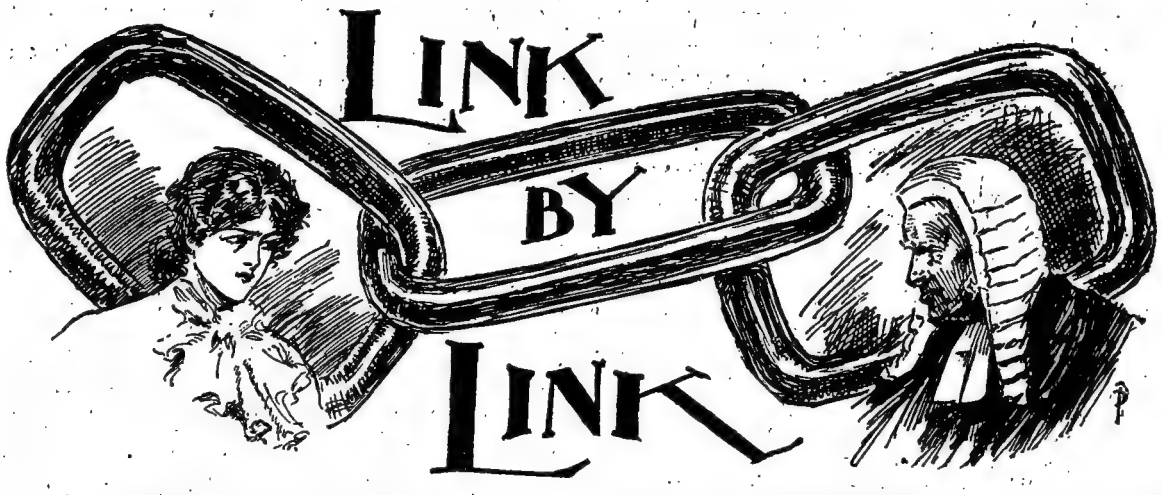
Once she rose from her seat for a moment and glanced over the splashboard to make sure that old Bess was safe from any danger beyond a severe nervous shock and a bad shaking up.

By-and-bye there was a glare of light as, with a roar and a shriek, the last express from Euston, in one of the carriages of which Mr. Tom Dyrenford was calmly collecting his rugs and wraps, came tearing round the curve.

The newspapers of next day duly recorded the "accident." Bess escaped without a scratch.

William Arthur.

THIS IS OUR NEXT WEEK'S COVER.



Principal Characters in the Story.

Gerald Mortimer: Of Moulstone Manor, in love with Nina Penhurst.

Mrs. Mortimer: Gerald's mother.

Dr. Branksome: Medical attendant at Moulstone asylum, a great friend of Gerald.

Anthony (or Felix) Cordelvin: An inmate of Moulstone asylum, who was found murdered.

Nina Penhurst: Governess at Moulstone Manor, a distant relative of Cordelvin.

Roderick Vanstone: Nina's guardian. He lives at Streatham, and has under his charge a man named Cordelvin, of weak intellect, whose estate, held in trust for Nina, he manages.

Stephen Vanstone: Roderick Vanstone's son.

The woman in the dark blue cloak: She was seen at Moulstone on the night of the murder, and has acted rather suspiciously since.

Stebbings and Burge: Men employed by Vanstone.

Inspector Trench: Of Scotland Yard, who is intrusted with the task of discovering the murderer of Cordelvin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Detective-Inspector Trench Overhears a Conversation.

Detective-Inspector John Trench lost little time in betaking himself once more to the purlieus of Streatham Hill. Although his new discovery of the identity of Mark Burge did not lead him forward on the main line of his investigation, his trained intelligence told him that it was a branch of inquiry well worth following up, and he, therefore, embarked upon it with the utmost keenness.

His present task was not one in which he could exhibit much activity. It was a case of waiting and watching; a criminal investigator's game of "patience." Fully recognising this, the zealous officer, still attired in the guise of an out-of-work artisan, passed an hour or so in pacing the roads in the immediate neighbourhood of the old house on the hill. This occupation proving profitless, in the sense that he did not catch even a momentary sight of Burge, he once more repaired to the "Old Grey Mare," the hostelry he had visited earlier in the day, and beguiled the time by indulging in a quiet game of bagatelle, to be afterwards followed by participation in a four-handed bout at cribbage.

Despite his apparently absorbed interest in these pastimes,—an interest warranted by skill which repeatedly drew forth the praises of the onlookers—the inspector never for one moment relaxed the tension of ear and eye, ever alert and watchful for a sound or sign of Burge. None came, however, and shortly after twelve o'clock, the officer rose and departed. He was a trifle disappointed, but in no sense dispirited. Having elected to play the game of "patience," he was not the kind of man to throw up the cards without giving them a fair trial.

"Burge hasn't turned up to-night, but he may to-morrow and if not then why, he will the next day, or the next," with which philosophical musings, Inspector Trench consoled himself, as he strolled slowly along the road.

Filling his pipe he halted for a moment to strike a match and then paused as he reflected that the blank wall along which he was walking was that which bordered the grounds of Mr. Cordelvin's house. He remained gazing at the wall, as if he might pierce through that and discover the mystery which his detective instincts had persuaded him the place inside contained. As he gazed, a peculiar sound fell suddenly upon his ears.

Chuck, chuck! came the sound from inside the grounds. The detective let his pipe go out and listened intently.

Again came the chucking sound from within.

"If that isn't somebody using a pick-axe," murmured the officer to himself, and pausing for an illustration sufficiently forcible, "why I'm a pro-Boer!"

He listened again, then walked—or rather glided—along the wall to get nearer to the spot from which the sound proceeded. Chuck! chuck! again, and then came a difference of sound as of a shovel scooping up earth. Presently there seemed to be a cessation of work. The shovelling ceased; a mumbling of voices buzzed through the silence.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Inspector Trench to himself, "two of them. Who's digging in there at this time of the night? What are they doing, and what are they talking about? I'd forfeit my future pension to know." He stood with his ear against the wall, but only the indistinct murmur of two voices reached him. To distinguish words was impossible.

He sidled along the wall to the gate, to find it, as he expected, locked. He looked at the straight high wall, almost tempted to make a frantic leap to clutch the top. But foreknowledge of the impossibility of such a thing, restrained him from the ottempt. Hurriedly he speculated on how to procure a ladder, and then hastily dismissed the idea as a vain one. If only a policeman would come along, he might get to the top of the wall *via* his shoulders.

He was about to set off in search of a constable, when once more a sound brought him to a halt. A different sound it was now; a long mocking laugh. The detective listened with bated breath. Again and yet again the weird laugh was repeated. And then there came the swish of skirts through grass and the officer rightly guessed that a woman was running. He kept pace with her on his side of the wall, making towards the gate. There she stopped, and Trench with his ear to the keyhole, bent down to listen. The altercation between Stephen Vanstone and the woman in the blue cloak reached his ears, and a minute later the voice of Roderick Vanstone made itself heard.

Every word of the scrappy conversation the inspector heard. Puzzling and elusive some of the references were, but the

detective, although unable to fully grasp their meaning at the moment, made careful mental note of everything, for consideration later on.

Then even while he was still bending down, he heard close to his ear, the sound of a key in the lock. Quickly he slipped aside, standing out of sight round a slight bend in the wall. A minute later the gate was opened, and the woman stepped out, The flutter of her blue cloak caught the officer's eye, and with it came a flash of illumination.

In a moment he recalled the fact that Dr. Branksome had told him something of a woman in a blue cloak. Gerald Mortimer had encountered such a one. He (the detective) had paid little heed to the story at the time, but he remembered that the alleged woman had worn a blue cloak, and yes, there was something peculiar about her eyes, according to the doctor's description.

Well, he must see her eyes! This sudden appearance of the woman under such strange circumstances had gone a great way towards upheaving the inspector's preconceived theories of the crime he was investigating. He must see the woman's eyes, and he must find out where she lived. The affair was one for delicate handling now. At present he must not accost or question the woman. No suspicion that she had been seen by him must be allowed to enter her mind.

With this thought in his brain, he crossed the road and hurried till he was some distance in front of the retreating woman. Then he recrossed, and stepped briskly back to meet her face to face.

CHAPTER XIX.

The "Lord Mayor" and the "Prisoner."

While the Vanstones, father and son, the woman in the blue cloak, and Detective-Inspector Trench, had thus been engaged in playing their respective parts in connection with the incident in the shrubbery, events had not stood still inside the house close by.

Since his somewhat extraordinary conversation with the unknown prisoner, Mr. Cordelvin, in his own poor, demented fashion, had been turning things over in his rambling mind.

The proposition incidentally made by Gerald Mortimer that, perhaps, Roderick Vanstone was playing him false, bewildered and worried him. He turned the words over in his mind time after time, only to become more bewildered than ever.

But out of the maze of bewilderment there presently sprang a suggestion for clearing the matter up. Another talk with the prisoner would be the way. The thought created the desire, and for the next few hours the lunatic was filled with an overwhelming wish to renew his acquaintance with Gerald Mortimer.

So, as he lay in bed he turned and tossed about, itching to leave his room and seek out Gerald, but, madman though he was, too cunning to run any great risks of discovery.

Fortunately, however, events combined to favour his purpose. For their own reasons, the Vanstones, anxious for as clear a coast as possible that night, had given Ned Stebbings permission to remain away till the next day. To Mark Burge was intrusted the double task of keeping an eye on Mr. Cordelvin and on Gerald Mortimer. A divided duty is often like two stools, calamitous to somebody. Burge, annoyed at the notion of extra work, and his mind full of an unconscious spirit of Trade-Unionism, determined to shirk as much of his duty as he possibly could.

In carrying out his fallacious theory of the relations between Capital and Labour, therefore, he not only did not do extra work, but failed even to perform his usual quantity. It is true in the course of the evening, he bobbed his head in at Mr. Cordelvin's door, to find the cunning madman ostensibly asleep, but really very wide awake indeed. Beyond that, however, he did nothing, unless a steady application to a bottle of whisky can be said to constitute work. To the bottle he certainly did apply himself zealously, with the inevitable result that he got sleepy, and turned over on the couch in his own room, with a strong desire for repose upon him, and no thought whatever of his responsibility.

Cordelvin, on the other hand, remained fully awake, absorbed with his purpose, and watching for an opportunity to put it into effect. After long and weary waiting till about midnight, he presently heard footsteps along the passage, and a minute later the slamming of a door. He was out of bed in a moment and applying his eyes to a chink in the window shutters. The rays of two lanterns danced over the grass outside, and disguised as the men who carried them were with slouched hats, the lunatic had no difficulty in identifying the two figures as those of the Vanstones. Ordinarily his mind might have wobbled in a speculation as to why they carried a pickaxe and other implements, and what could be their business outside at so late an hour. But now no such probings of motives occurred to him. He only knew that they were out of the house, and gathered from that fact that the fulfilment of his own purpose was so much easier.

Not a moment did he lose in slipping on some clothes, and having placed his feet in a pair of soft slippers, he stealthily left his room. The door next to his was slightly ajar. It led into the room in which Burge or Stebbings usually kept watch. The lunatic on tiptoe advanced and peeped in. Seeing the recumbent figure of Burge upon the couch from which issued a series of guttural snores, it occurred to him as an idea of genius to close the door and turn the key. Which he promptly did.

To the door of the room in which the prisoner was confined was not many yards, and Cordelvin, less apprehensive now of any interruption, hurried along the intervening passage. The door of the room was locked, but the key was outside and Cordelvin turned it noiselessly. He opened the door a few inches, and peeped in. The prisoner was there still, lying down, his chin forward on his breast, his eyes staring in dejection before him.

He turned wearily as the door opened, started a little on beholding the unexpected face of Cordelvin, but quietly recovered and raised himself to his feet.

Cordelvin entered, holding up a warning finger for silence. Gerald Mortimer started again as he noticed that his visitor had only one arm. Opportunity for speculation, however, regarding this astounding coincidence with the condition of the murdered man whom he had discovered, there was none. Cordelvin began to speak.

"Hush!" he murmured, "this is irregular for the Lord Mayor to visit a prisoner, but I took it into my head to do so, while the gaolers are away."

As at the previous interview Gerald Mortimer fell at once into the madman's humour and promptly nursed his delusion.

"Welcome, my lord!" he said, with a polite bow, "humble, but hearty welcome. Your lordship will pardon the liberty I take when I say that I *knew* I should get justice at your hands."

Cordelvin cocked his head quaintly on one side as was his habit when pleased by a little flattery. He was about to say something to the point, when another notion jumped into his mind and he inquired:

"How much does it cost to get polar-bear skins from the North Pole?"

With difficulty Gerald restrained his inclination to smile, He must please this poor, demented man, must humour him at all costs. That way alone lay his only chance of getting any assistance.

"Ha!" he said, with the utmost gravity, "you mentioned about those skins to-day, my lord. Now I think, and I'm sure you won't use my statement as evidence against me, that Mr. Vanstone is not treating you squarely over that business."

"Ha!"

"I believe, my lord," Gerald pursued in a confidential undertone, "that Mr. Vanstone is not getting them from the North Pole at all. He's getting them from a furrier's and they're not genuine."

The eyes of the madman rolled angrily as he replied:

"If that turns out true, I'll have his head chopped off."

Gerald saw here a chance.

"I don't ask you to believe me, my lord," he said, "but I've another witness outside this very house."

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"Let him be sent for immediately."

"It's unfortunate my lord, but there's no one to send. It wouldn't be safe to send the gaolers, would it?"

The question and its obvious answer seemed to nonplus the demented man. He stood stock still for several minutes, his poor brain striving to find a solution of the difficulty. At last he seemed to find one. He looked at Gerald sharply and said:

"Couldn't you go and fetch the witness in?"

This was precisely what Gerald had been leading up to, but he knew very well that he must not arouse the lunatic's suspicions by accepting the suggestion too eagerly. So he replied, with a slow and mournful shake of the head:

"I could fetch him of course, and I'd like for your lordship's sake to do so, but you see, my hands are bound. I can't go like this. No, I'm afraid we shall have to wait."

Cordelvin did not reply. Instead he walked behind Gerald, and touched his bound wrists. The other's heart throbbed with hope. Was this lunatic really going to release him? He was certainly fumbling at the knots. But what an unconscionable time he was. Beads of perspiration stood on the brow of the impatient Gerald. Handicapped as the lunatic was by the loss of a hand, he could not manage the cords readily. Yet he stuck tenaciously to his task for full twenty minutes, till at last, Oh joy! the first knot gave.

Gerald's heart jumped in his breast as he realised that each moment now took him nearer to freedom. As the loosened cords fell from his aching wrists, he suppressed with difficulty an exclamation of joy, and said in a trembling voice, "Now I will go for the witness!"

He started to leave the room as he spoke, but a sudden sound as of the opening and shutting of another door arrested his footsteps.

A moment later he heard a voice cry:

"Burge, Burge, where are you? Get warm water at once and bathe my father's eyes. Do you hear, Burge? Where the dickens are you?"

The Vanstones had returned and to Gerald came immediately the thought that any attempt to escape meant a fierce fight. The noise outside continued, the voices now being interlarded by the turning of a key and the violent throwing open of a door. Stephen Vanstone had discovered Burge's plight and had released him. A moment later and they had acquainted themselves with the absence of Cordelvin from his room, and a speedy scurry towards the room where Gerald was ensued.

Gerald heard them coming, heard the double sound of heavy footsteps. In a moment he had decided what to do. Taking his stand near the door, he waited a moment. Then as the door was quickly thrown open, his clenched fists shot full into the face of Stephen Vanstone, placing him *hors de combat* for the moment. Over his prostrate body Gerald leapt, but at that moment he came into such violent collision with Mark Burge that both were brought heavily to the ground.

Unfortunately, from the awkwardness of his fall, Gerald was slow to recover himself. He was about to rise when the semi-drunken Burge, who, by a miracle, had managed to scramble to his feet first, pounced down upon him. The two struggled on the ground, Gerald managing to get a grip of his assailant's throat. So effective was this grip that in another moment he would have thrown Burge off, but in that moment Stephen Vanstone, having now recovered himself, rushed in, and with a short heavy stick dealt him a fearful blow on his head. The grasp of Gerald Mortimer relaxed, his head fell back and he sank to the floor unconscious.

CHAPTER XX.

What the Detective's Search Revealed.

Having obtained a glimpse of the woman's eyes, Detective-inspector Trench was satisfied immediately that she answered exactly the description given of her by Gerald Mortimer to Dr. Branksome, and detailed by the latter to the officer himself. At a discreet distance he followed the woman down the Brixton Road, through diverse side roads until finally she stopped and entered a big block of flats off the Clapham Road.

VICTIMS TO COMPLEXION.

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Noticing from the sudden appearance of a light that she lived on the second floor, the officer soon afterwards hailed a cab and drove home, fairly well satisfied with his evening's work.

"I'm on the right track now, I think," he murmured to himself, "and the first job to-morrow will be to see Mr. Mortimer and bring him face to face with this woman for identification purposes."

But in the morning as Inspector Trench sat looking over the papers after breakfast, he was destined to receive a surprise. While glancing over the headings, his eye was arrested by the following:

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF A BARRISTER.
FOUL PLAY SUSPECTED.

"Considerable anxiety is being felt in the Temple and elsewhere at the unaccountable disappearance of Mr. Gerald Mortimer, barrister-at-law. Particulars of the case are very meagre at present, but it has transpired that late on Thursday evening Mr. Mortimer was seen to leave Middle Temple Lane in company with a short stout man, obviously one of the working class. Since then nothing has been seen or heard of the missing barrister. It is feared in some quarters that Mr. Mortimer has been the victim of foul play."

Inspector Trench laid down the paper with a gasp. Then he hurriedly rose, put on his coat and hat and at once made his way to Scotland Yard.

Very little information could he glean from his colleagues there. Mr. Mortimer had been seen by the gate-keeper to leave the Temple and enter a four-wheeler in company with a strange man. That was all they knew. There had been nothing startling or suspicious in the occurrence, and the gate-keeper had taken but little notice.

Inspector Trench's brow contracted. The mystery which he was trying to elucidate, was deepening. Last night he seemed to be in a fair way to discover something in connection with the woman in the blue cloak. Now, his principal means of identifying her as the person seen hanging about in the neighbourhood of Moulstone Asylum, had gone. Obviously the disappearance of Mr. Mortimer was bound up with the murder of Felix Cordelvin, but in what way? He must follow the woman up now. It was the most promising clue he had. And a good idea would be to get Dr. Branksome up to town. He might possibly know something more of the woman than he had communicated. In any case, as a close friend of Gerald Mortimer, he might be of some service in connection with the latter's disappearance.

At half-past two that afternoon Dr. Branksome arrived at Charing Cross. Inspector Trench was there to meet him, having spent the morning in making a few inquiries in the neighbourhood of Bowenden Mansions, Clapham, where the strange woman lived, and in setting a plain-clothes constable to watch her movements.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Branksome," the inspector said, "to have had to bring you up to town, but I thought perhaps you might be able to assist me. You mentioned, when I last saw you, something about Mr. Mortimer having met a strange woman?"

"Yes," responded the doctor, "I did. Mortimer met her late on the night preceding the escape of Felix Cordelvin. She was an oldish woman, he said, with strange-looking eyes, and a faded blue cloak. Have you any news of her?"

"I believe I have found her," replied the detective calmly, "I stumbled across her quite by accident late last night." And he forthwith gave the doctor a brief account of the incident. The doctor listened with the keenest interest.

"Do you suspect her of the murder?" he asked. "And do you think she has something to do with the disappearance of poor Mortimer?"

The detective evaded the question.

"I know too little as yet to decide definitely," he replied, "but I want you to see this woman, Dr. Branksome."

"I'm ready to do whatever you like to assist in clearing up this mystery," the doctor said.

"Very good, then. We'll take a cab over to Clapham now."

The plain-clothes constable reported when they arrived that the woman in the blue cloak was at present indoors

"But she's been out all the morning, sir," he explained to the inspector, "she took a cab to Streatham Hill, and spent nearly two hours walking up and down and looking at an old house that lies back off the high road, sir."

The inspector exchanged a quick glance with the doctor.

"What's more, sir," the plain-clothes man resumed, "she ordered the cabman to be back here again at half-past three."

"Half-past three!" echoed the detective glancing at his watch, "why, it's nearly that now. Very well, Jennings"—to the constable—"you keep your eye on her and follow her again. I may be about here when you return. If not, I will send a relief on for you, and you can then come on to the Yard and report to me."

The inspector drew the doctor aside, and talked quietly with him. About a quarter of an hour later an empty cab turned round the corner, and halted outside the block of flats.

"Now then, Dr. Branksome," the inspector said, "that's her cab I expect. We'd better move slowly up to get a good sight of the woman when she comes out."

They walked along towards the spot where the cab stood. The cabman had entered the flats, and now reappeared and mounted his box. Immediately afterwards a female figure appeared attired in a blue cloak.

"There she is!" whispered the detective, and the two quickened their steps.

As they drew abreast of the cab, the woman had just taken her seat. The two men got a full view of her face.

Neither said anything. They stood watching the cab as it rolled away, followed quickly by another with Jennings inside. Not till the two vehicles had disappeared round the corner, did the detective glance at his companion. When he did he was startled. Dr. Branksome had gone as white as a sheet.

"Good Heavens, man!" the officer exclaimed, "What is the matter? You look as if you had seen a ghost."

The doctor pulled himself together.

"Excuse me, inspector," he said in a voice that trembled with agitation, "but for the moment I thought I had seen a ghost!"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean," responded Dr. Branksome slowly and decisively, "that that woman is the living image of Felix Cordelvin!"

For a full minute the two stood regarding one another in silence, amazement showing on both their faces.

The detective was the first to speak.

"What do you make of it, doctor?" he asked.

Dr. Branksome shook his head.

"It is beyond me," he said, "but the likeness is wonderful. The same colour hair, the same nose and mouth, above all the same extraordinary eyes. But for the difference of skin texture, I could almost have sworn it was Felix Cordelvin come to life again."

The detective paused a moment. Then he said: "Dr. Branksome, what you say has confirmed me in my theory that this woman is the sister of Felix Cordelvin."

"His sister! why I never knew he had any relatives."

"Well, he had. I have discovered so from inquiries made in various quarters. He had a sister and he had a cousin. This woman is his sister—Ruth Cordelvin, beyond a doubt. The cousin is Anthony Cordelvin who lives on Streatham Hill."

"Anthony Cordelvin! Why, that is the name that Felix used to claim."

"So I've been told. But he had no right to it. It is his cousin's name. From what I understand, Anthony Cordelvin had a lot of money left him, while Felix who expected some of it, went off in a huff to Australia followed by his sister. Felix was always a mad-headed irresponsible person, and the disappointment in his expectations probably preyed on his mind till he became insane. Insanity apparently is somewhat common in the family."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, you know of the extraordinary behaviour of the sister. As for the cousin Anthony Cordelvin, he seems almost as mentally incapable as was Felix."

"Have you seen Anthony?"

"No, not at present. I have only lately got on to this

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branch of the inquiry. He is under the care of a solicitor named Roderick Vanstone, who is sole administrator of the estate during Anthony Cordelvin's life."

"Who is the next heir?"

"Miss Nina Penhurst."

"What, the girl who was governess at Moulstone Manor?"

"The same. I will explain all about that later on. I propose in a day or two to accompany her to see Anthony Cordelvin. As heir to the property she has right of access to him you know."

Both were silent after that, each busy with his own thoughts. Presently Inspector Trench looked up at the window of Ruth Cordelvin's flat.

"I've a good mind to risk it!" he murmured half aloud.

"Risk what?" inquired the doctor.

"Why, risk doing a bit of house-breaking. I've no search-warrant, and it's against regulations of course, but I would like to examine those rooms up there, while she's away. However, I've no wish to drag you into it."

"But how would you manage it?"

"Very easily. Ruth Cordelvin—or Miss Richardson as she calls herself here—lives alone. I found that out this morning. And I've got a key that will open her door. Yes, and by Jove! I'll have a look at her rooms. I may not get another such opportunity. Will you wait here for me?"

"No, I will come with you."

"All right, only don't if you'd rather not."

"Oh, I'll take the risk. Like you, I believe the end will justify the means."

"Then come along!" and the two men passed into the building.

They had little difficulty in finding the door they wanted. The name of "Miss Richardson," painted in black letters, showed them plainly which it was. The detective's key quite fulfilled his expectations.

It was a small sitting-room in which they found themselves, furnished very plainly with a table and chairs, and a writing desk in the corner.

"I should like to see inside this," remarked Inspector Trench, trying a drawer of the desk. "But I haven't a key to fit, and it wouldn't do to burst the lock. Let's have a glance at the other rooms."

They passed into the kitchen, but found nothing suspicious there. The bedroom alone remained to be visited. Their cursory examination of that room at first promised to be as unyielding of anything in the shape of a tangible clue, as the other apartments.

Inspector Trench over in a corner pulled open the door of a cupboard. It was growing dusk, and to discern what was inside was a difficult matter. The dim outline of what looked like a big glass jar caught his eye. He struck a match and peered at it closely.

Then from his lips there broke a startled cry. The match had gone out, and he did not strike another. The doctor, attracted by the cry, was by his side in a moment.

"What is it?" he demanded, "What have you found?"

"Find a candle, or a lamp or something," ordered the detective peremptorily, "we must have a light. Find one in the kitchen."

Like a child obeying its parent, the doctor darted away. Presently he returned with a candle. He struck a match and lighted it. The inspector had closed the cupboard door, and stood holding the handle.

The doctor gazed mutely at him for a moment. Then he said:

"Inspector, you have found something. What is it?"

The detective was silent for a second or two. Then at length he spoke.

"Yes, doctor," he said slowly, "I have found something. Something more in your line of business than mine. I've found a glass jar such as I've seen in museums. It's full of a coloured liquid and there's something else in it which may not shock you quite as much as it did me, you doubtless having seen such things before. Doctor, bring the candle and look."

Wonderingly, the doctor did as he was bid. The detective pulled open the cupboard door. The doctor peered in.

"Good Heavens!" he cried, aghast, and started back a step.

"Dr. Branksome!" said the detective, "I am wondering if my eyes deceived me. What is in that jar?"

The doctor replied from a dry throat.

"That is an arm!" he said, "a man's amputated arm!"

The inspector's eyes looked away from the cupboard.

"That's what I thought," he said. "A man's arm!" Then he added in a low voice. "And Felix Cordelvin was discovered with his arm cut off."

The doctor nodded.

"Then," said the officer. "Ruth Cordelvin must be arrested to-night!"

(To be continued.)

Drying the Candles.

"How came such a greasy mess in the oven?" asked a fidgety old spinster of Bridget. "Why," replied the girl, "the candles fell into the wather and I put them into the oven to dry."

She Liked Spelling.

A VISITOR was chatting with the little daughter of the family. "What do you study at school?" he asked. "Readin' an' writin' an' 'rithmetic an' spellin'." "Well, well. What a bright little girl you are. And which study do you like best?" "Spellin'." "Indeed. Most children do not. Why do you like spelling?" "'Cause every time I spell a word the teacher laughs."

Cause for Thankfulness.

A POOR old woman who had just seen the ocean for the first time, was asked by her son: "What do you think of the sea?" "Think," replied the old dame, after a long pause. "I can't think, Jim, I can only thank Providence for having shown me something in my life of which there seems to be enough and to spare."

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What is Disparity of Age?

My correspondents' troubles seem to work on a system of waves, as each week a problem arises which seems to be in the ascendency over all others. This week it is as above. "J. M." (Barry) is thirty-five years of age, and tells me that from motives of expediency he contemplates an alliance with a girl of sixteen. He asks me if such a marriage would end unhappily.

❦❦❦

I do not wish to be a pessimist, but I cannot sympathise with the proposal. Even under ordinary circumstances, a man cannot hope for happiness in marriage when he candidly confesses his motive to be expediency. Particularly is this the case with "J. M.," who is undoubtedly courting trouble.

❦❦❦

A girl of sixteen could scarcely have a natural affection for a man so much older than herself. Unless she is a very original young lady, her ideal must be towards a younger man, though at the time she may not know it. The danger is that after a year or so of married life this ideal will be awakened, and she will unconsciously find herself face to face with the man she would have loved had she waited a year or so. What terrible mischief results from such a development is, alas, too well known to need reference. No, "J. M.," if you want my advice, go no further in this matter, unless the girl is really devoted to you, and sufficiently unlike other girls as to be indifferent to the attractions of younger men.

❦❦❦

It Depends on the Ages.

Now in the case of "C. G." and several other correspondents, the disparity of age referred to above, is not a serious factor. "C. G." is twenty and loves a man of thirty. This is a very different state of affairs. Though it would be much more poetic, perhaps, if "C. G.'s," amour were a youth, on practical grounds, the man of thirty will probably make her the better husband, and, after all, a man is young at thirty. He is more likely to have an assured position in life and to be able to give her a good home. So, "C. G.," don't bother about any disparity of age if you both love each other.

❦❦❦

Now I come to another aspect of the same question. In this case it is the man who is six years younger than the girl, though R. D. A., who asks my advice on the question, does not say what are their ages. I know of a young man who, at twenty-three, married a girl of twenty-eight, and their married life after two years is of an almost ideal character. As I have often pointed out, there are many men, as also women, whose affections are more likely to go out to those older than themselves than to those younger, and in such cases, I have very rarely encountered any but the happiest results.

❦❦❦

Trials of a Youthful Hostess.

I am sorry for you, "Winnie," but the little trials of housekeeping and entertaining during your mother's absence will do you no harm in the long run. After all, you have your "hair up," haven't you, and all you want is to be amiable and dignified, and as tactful as you can be, and you will please people entirely. You made a mistake when some visitors called the other day in leaving the introductions to be done by your brother. As representing your mother, you should have assumed the duties, even though he is much older than you. Yes, always introduce the gentleman to the lady, and don't confine your conversation to any particular guest, but try and get a word in with everybody.

❦❦❦

A girl who is entertaining on behalf of her mother should for once drop the demureness imposed on her on other occasions. She must try and lead the conversation to the best of her ability, even if she is inexperienced in the gentle art of small talk. People would rather follow the lead of ever so young a hostess than sit embarrassed and silent. So, "Winnie," next time any guests call talk about something, no matter if you have to descend to asking people if they have heard "The Honeysuckle and the Bee," or if they play ping-pong. As time goes on you will soon drop into the technique of talking, and may as well start as early as possible.

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Should They Have Played Games?

Talking about entertaining, a married correspondent, "Alice R." (Warwick), tells me that she gave a party the other day to her husband's business friends and their wives, but things fell terribly flat, in spite of all her efforts to make them enjoy themselves. It afterwards occurred to her whether she should not have provided some games for her guests. She would have done so, only a friend of hers had given a most successful party recently without them and she thought she would do the same.

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If people know each other very well, "Alice R.," and you have some music, games are not only unnecessary but often regarded as rather an infliction by people who would prefer to talk to each other. But when in your case you brought together several people who I imagine knew each other very slightly, and possibly were not very musical, I think you ought to have anticipated what happened, and arranged for progressive whist, or some other card game which you should have stated on your invitation card. My advice to hostesses is to endeavour to bring together people of similar tastes and try and interest the right persons in each other. This is, after all, the most enjoyable kind of gathering, as there are few things more distressing than to have to "make" conversation with people one does not know and will possibly not meet again.

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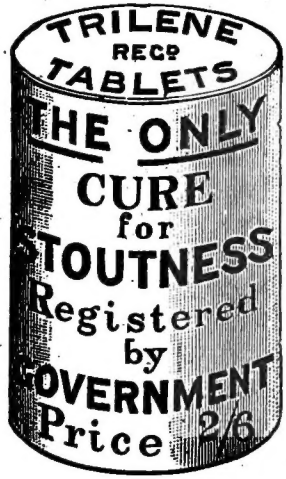
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be CURED by taking

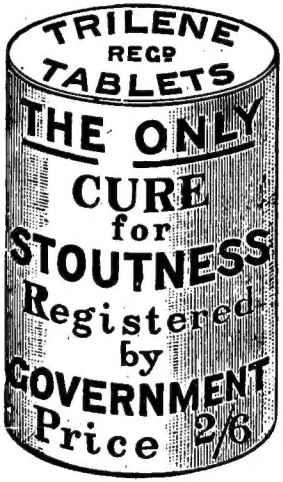
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"67 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

MISS CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st., and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 21lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me.

"Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silvereigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Miss NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Risholm Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

"West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets, which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44 Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 5lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weigh was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. H. COX, 23 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

Mr. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs., says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mrs. E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 63 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATIENT, of Woodberry, Theydon Bois: "Feel great benefit from Tablets. I have lost 2st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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FAMOUS

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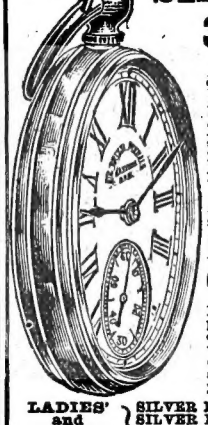
(Gent's or Lady's).



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